

Five New Year's Wine
Resolutions page 32

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A make-ahead
Roast Beef
Holiday Menu

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Secrets



Spice-rubbed roast beef
tenderloin and braised
fennel with orange, page 42

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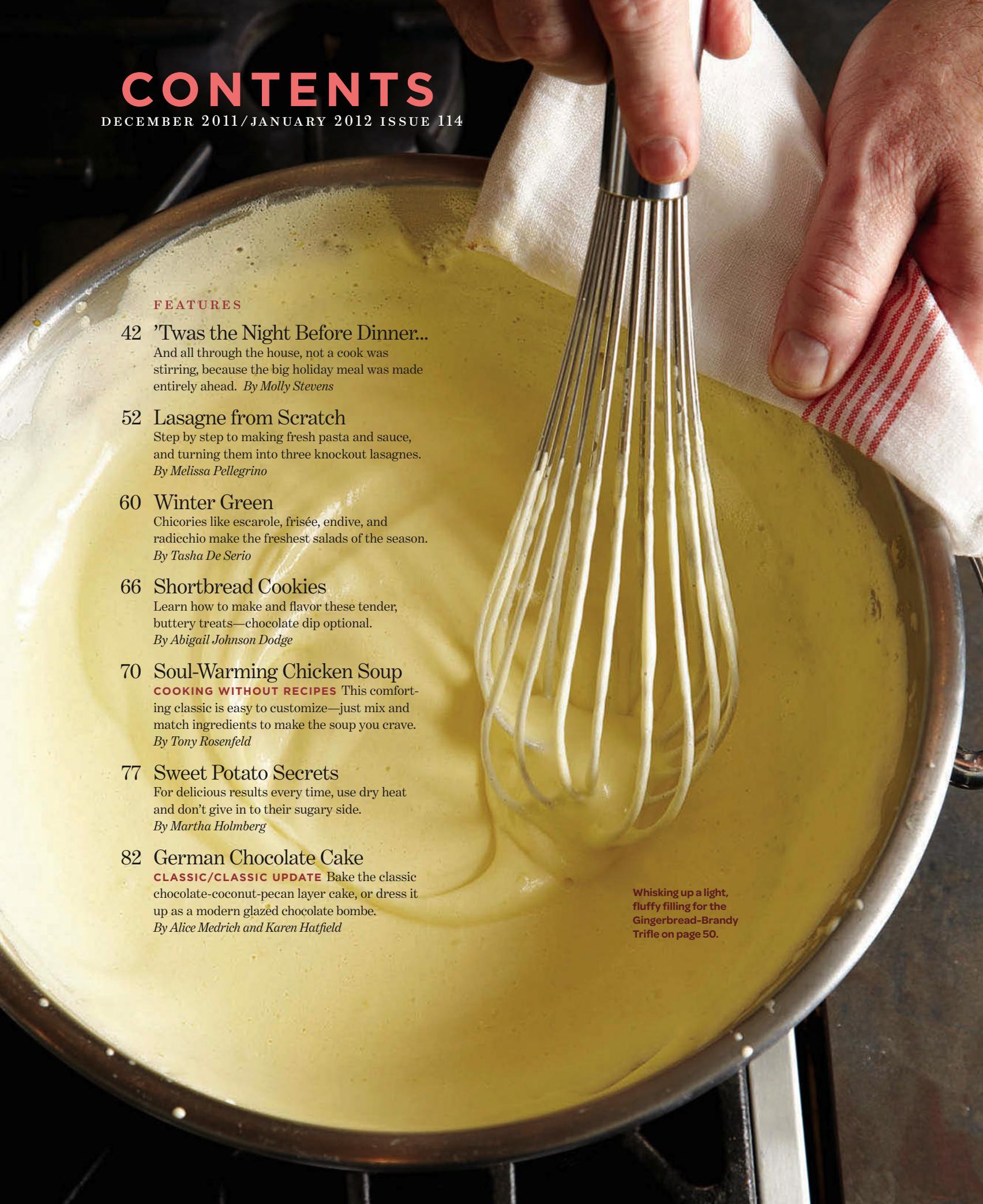
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Photographs: cover by Hector Sanchez; food styling by Paul Grimes; p. 3 by Romulo Yanes; all others by Scott Phillips; illustration by Ken Orvidas



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READERS' LETTERS

THE WINNER

A Greener Way to Store Greens

I prefer the taste of bunched greens and lettuces over packaged supermarket blends, but they always seem to spoil quickly or disappear into the crisper drawer. A 2-quart glass jar solves the problem. I rinse and spin-dry the lettuce, put a paper towel at the bottom of the jar, put the lettuce inside, and screw the cap on. Fresh and ready-to-go greens appeal to everyone who opens the refrigerator; we eat more salads all week long, and the storage method is more environmentally friendly than plastic bags. —*Carlen Arnett, Port Jefferson, New York*

We want to hear from you. Send us your best tip and we'll pick a winner from all the entries. Carlen is the winner of this Lodge 7-quart cast-iron Dutch oven.

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Smashing Potatoes

The White Wine Smashed Potatoes ("A Crowd-Pleasing Thanksgiving," October/November) were wonderful; the wine lent a warm, mellow flavor to the potatoes. For a quiet Saturday night supper, my husband and I, being die-hard butter lovers, added our usual pats, which didn't take away from the potatoes' gentle olive oil flavor. This dish went very well with the Sautéed Kale with Garlic and Lemon from the same story.

—*Lee Wallace, Reston, Virginia*

Side Tonight, Sandwich Tomorrow

I made the Knotted Dinner Rolls ("Buttery Dinner Rolls," October/November) for guests, and they were a huge success. Shaping and baking them was easy, and the results spectacular. Plus, the rolls were big enough to use for sandwiches the next day. Thanks for a great recipe.

—*Edie Lucie, Athens, Ohio*

Un-beet-able

The Chocolate-Beet Layer Cake ("Beets," October/November) was to die for! It was so rich, without a hint of beet flavor, and I loved

the frosting. The only change I made was to double the amount of espresso powder, since I like strong coffee with my chocolate. It's the only chocolate cake I'll make from now on.

—*Kathy Eisaman, Stanwood, Washington*

Garlic Takeover

I was disappointed that garlic was used in almost every recipe in your Thanksgiving menu ("A Crowd-Pleasing Thanksgiving," October/November). To me, it was a bit too much; the garlic flavor would spoil many of the dishes I make with Thanksgiving leftovers.

—*Florence Johnson, Pittsboro, North Carolina*

Worth Its Weight

Thanks so much to David Guas for his fantastic pecan pie recipes ("Pecan Pie," October/November). I'm originally a southern girl, and pecan pie is a long-time favorite of mine—it's well worth the calories.

—*Maggie Gwaltney, Hallevik, Sweden*

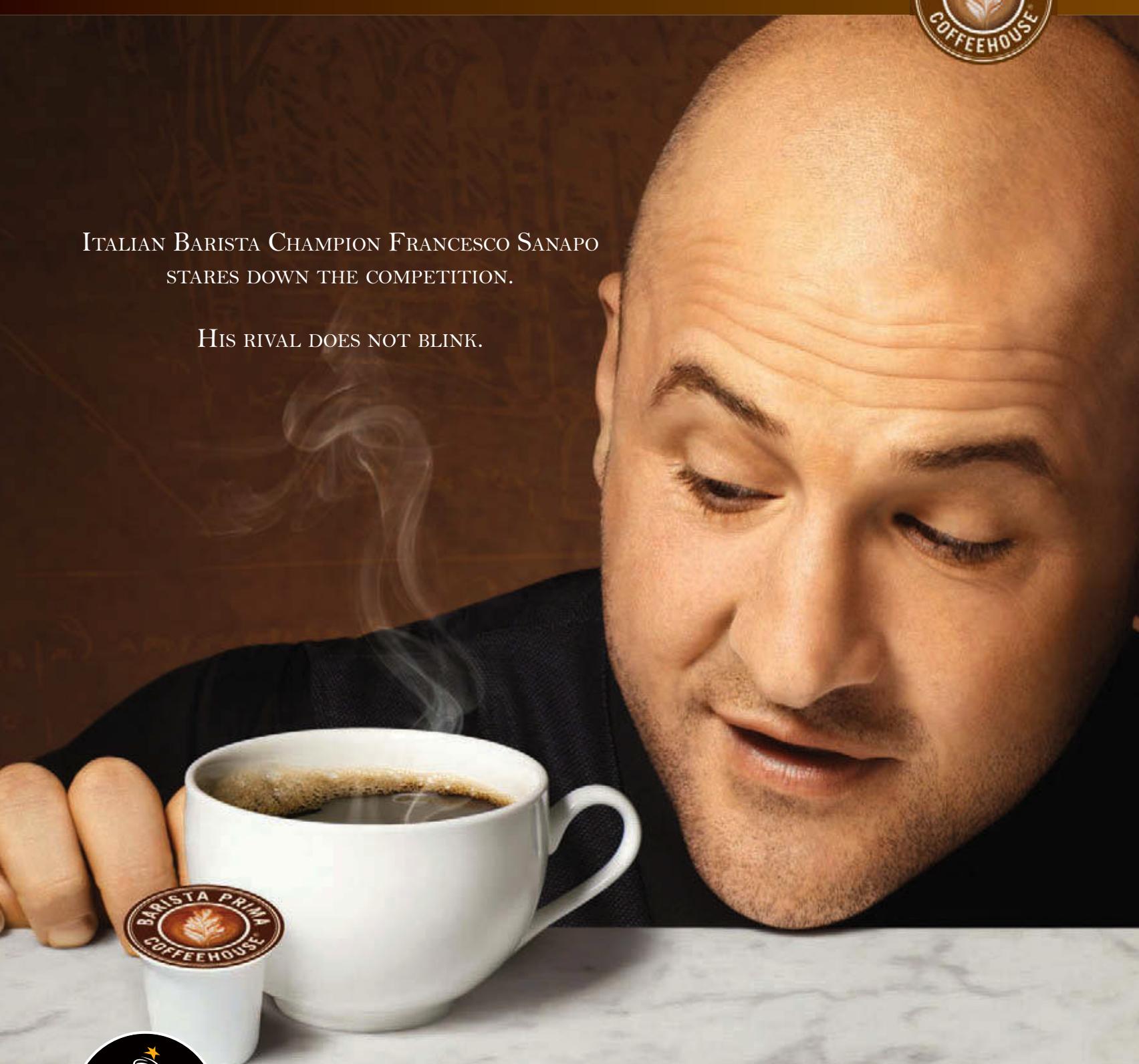
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Former *Fine Cooking* publisher **Martha Holmberg** ("Sweet Potato Secrets," page 77) is a cookbook author and food editor based in Portland, Oregon.

Her latest book, *Puff*, is about delicious ways to use puff pastry.

- **My least favorite food is...** green bell pepper; it tastes like poison.
- **If I weren't a cookbook author, I'd be...** a casting director.
- **The dish I most want to learn to cook is...** a great loaf of bread. I know there's a baker somewhere inside me.



Pastry chef and chocolate expert **Alice Medrich** ("German Chocolate Cake," page 82) has written eight cookbooks; her latest, *Chewy*

Gooey Crispy Crunchy Melt-in-Your-Mouth Cookies, won the 2011 International Association of Culinary Professionals award for best baking book.

- **My favorite herb or spice is...** tarragon when I'm feeling French and cardamom when I'm baking.
- **The strangest thing I've ever eaten was...** an apple pie with blue food coloring that my childhood best friend and I made.
- **Currently, I'm obsessed with...** making cocktails. I had no idea it was so much fun.



Melissa Pellegrino ("Lasagne from Scratch," page 52) is a former *Fine Cooking* assistant food editor. She co-wrote *The*

Italian Farmer's Table with her husband, Matthew Scialabba; their second cookbook, *The Southern Italian Farmer's Table*, comes out this spring. They recently opened Bufalina, a brick-oven pizzeria, in Guilford, Connecticut.

- **My best meal in recent memory was...** a fish feast in Sicily. We had smoked swordfish, cured tuna, glass eel fish cakes, fried mussels, and baby squid.
- **On a normal day, breakfast is...** fresh ricotta drizzled with honey.
- **Three things that are always in my refrigerator or pantry are...** eggs, wine, and peanut butter.



Fine Cooking contributing editor **Tony Rosenfeld** ("Soul-Warming Chicken Soup," page 70) is the author of two cookbooks: *Sear, Sauce, and Serve* and

150 Things to Make with Roast Chicken (and 50 Ways to Roast It). He's also the co-owner of b. good, a Boston-based healthy fast food chain, and the creator of cookangel.com, a culinary troubleshooting website.

- **My latest kitchen purchase is...** chipotle and jalapeño flakes—they add a nice zing of heat to spice rubs.
- **My favorite food memory is...** eating from the street carts in northern Thailand.
- **My desert island food is...** prosciutto; it would pair well with the tropical fruit.



Food writer, cooking teacher, and *Fine Cooking* contributing editor **Molly Stevens** ("Twas the Night Before Dinner," page 42), has written nine cookbooks, including the award-winning *All About Braising*. Her latest book, *All About Roasting*, came out in November.

- **My ideal pizza is topped with...** very little. For me, it's all about the crust.
- **My dinner party specialty is...** a big roast of some sort; carving one makes any meal feel like a special occasion.
- **My best meal in recent memory is...** grilled butterflied goat leg with wild rice and greens.



Karen Hatfield ("German Chocolate Cake," page 82) has worked in the pastry kitchens at Café Boulud, Jean-Georges, and Gramercy Tavern in New

York City. She and her husband, Quinn, are the chef-owners of Hatfield's restaurant in Los Angeles.

- **The last thing I baked was...** a batch of cinnamon-maple croissants.
- **My favorite cold weather comfort food is...** my husband's pumpkin agnolotti.
- **My drink of choice is...** anything mixed with Champagne.

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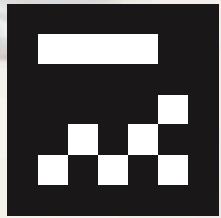


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- Desserts Party

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- Weeknight chicken
- Seasonal soups
- Quick desserts, and more



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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Just 30 minutes to dinner, start to finish



To wilt the spinach perfectly, put it in a colander and drain the pasta over it.

penne with spinach, gorgonzola, and walnuts

Chopped nuts are unusual in pasta, but they pair brilliantly with the earthy Gorgonzola in this creamy fall dish. Toasting the nuts deepens their flavor, so don't skip this step. **Serves 4**

- Kosher salt
- 8 oz. fresh baby spinach leaves (10 lightly packed cups)
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 12 oz. dried penne (3½ cups)
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 2½ oz. crumbled Gorgonzola (½ cup)
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 Tbs. thinly sliced fresh chives

- Position a rack in the center of the oven** and heat the oven to 350°F. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil. Put the spinach in a colander in the sink. **Toast the walnuts** on a rimmed baking sheet in the oven until dark golden-brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Set aside. **Cook the penne** according to package directions. Reserve about ½ cup of the cooking water and drain the pasta in the colander over the spinach.

Put the cream, Gorgonzola, ¼ tsp. pepper, and a pinch of salt in a 12-inch nonstick skillet and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until slightly thickened, 2 to 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium, add the pasta and spinach, and 2 Tbs. each of the walnuts and chives. Cook, stirring constantly, until some of the sauce is absorbed by the pasta, about 2 minutes. If necessary, add some of the cooking water to moisten the pasta. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to serving bowls, sprinkle with the remaining 2 Tbs. walnuts and 1 Tbs. chives, and serve.

—Lori Longbotham



Duck breasts are best served medium rare so they stay juicy and tender, but feel free to adjust the cooking time to achieve your preferred doneness.

plum-glazed duck breasts

The elegance of this dish belies its simplicity. The secret is the sweet spiced glaze, made with plum preserves and Asian seasonings. If you can't find plum preserves, cherry or currant preserves make good substitutes. **Serves 4**

- 2 boneless, skin-on duck breast halves (about 1 lb. each)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup plum preserves
- 1 Tbs. reduced-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ tsp. Chinese five-spice powder
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- 3 scallions, thinly sliced

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Trim any excess skin and fat from the duck and score the remaining skin and fat underneath in a 1-inch diamond pattern, taking care not to cut the flesh. Pat the duck dry and season generously with salt and pepper.

Heat a 12-inch heavy-duty skillet over medium-high heat. Put the duck in the skillet skin side down, reduce the heat to medium low, and render the fat until only a thin, crisp layer of skin remains, about 8 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the preserves, soy sauce, five-spice powder, and red pepper flakes.

Turn the duck over, carefully spoon off most of the fat from the skillet, and brush the preserves mixture over the breasts.

Transfer the skillet to the oven and roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of a breast registers 135°F for medium rare, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer the duck to a cutting board and let rest for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, tilt the skillet and spoon off as much fat from the pan juice as possible. Slice the duck diagonally into ¼-inch slices. Arrange on plates and spoon the pan juice over. Sprinkle with the scallions and serve. —*Joanna Pruess*

pork chops with green chiles and onions

A double dose of chile—canned and powder—adds pleasant heat to this quick skillet braise. The peppers' light green hue may fade slightly as they simmer, but their spicy essence intensifies into a delicious sauce. **Serves 4**

- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. pure ancho chile powder or chili powder
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 center-cut boneless pork chops, preferably about 1 inch thick (about 1½ lb. total)
- ¾ cup lower-salt chicken broth; more as needed
- 1 4-oz. can chopped green chiles
- 3 Tbs. chopped jarred jalapeños (from about 12 slices)
- 1 Tbs. cider vinegar
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- 3 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced

In a small bowl, combine the cumin, chile powder, 1½ tsp. salt and ¾ tsp. pepper. Sprinkle on both sides of the pork and set aside. In a blender or food processor, purée the chicken broth, green chiles (with their liquid), jalapeños, and vinegar until smooth.

Put the flour in a pie plate and dredge the pork chops, shaking to remove any excess. Heat a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Pour in 2 Tbs. of the oil and heat until shimmering hot, about 1 minute. Add the pork chops and cook, without moving, until they're brown around the

edges and release easily from the pan, 2 to 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium, flip, and cook the other side until browned, about 2 minutes more. Transfer to a large plate.

Over medium-high heat, add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil and the onion to the skillet. Sprinkle with ½ tsp. salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until wilted and golden, about 4 minutes. Add the green chile mixture and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook, stirring, until the mixture thickens slightly and the onions are completely tender, 2 to 3 minutes more; add a splash of chicken broth if the mixture seems dry. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Return the chops to the pan, nestling them into the onions. Cover and simmer gently until the pork is fairly firm to the touch with just a little give, 3 to 5 minutes. With a paring knife, make a nick in a thicker chop to make sure it's only just a little pink.

Serve the pork chops topped with the sauce. —*Tony Rosenfeld*

Choose all-natural pork for the best flavor and texture. Avoid so-called extra-juicy chops that have been treated with additives, which can give them a rubbery texture.





portobello mushrooms with creamy spinach-artichoke filling

This vegetarian main course brings together the addictive flavors of stuffed mushrooms and spinach and artichoke dip. **Serves 4**

- 3 Tbs. olive oil
- 3 medium cloves garlic, minced (1 Tbs.)
- 4 medium portobello mushrooms, stemmed, gills removed (see Test Kitchen, p. 89)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 3 Tbs. mayonnaise

- 1½ tsp. fresh thyme
- 9 to 10 oz. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 9 oz. frozen artichokes, thawed, lightly squeezed dry, and chopped
- ½ cup fresh breadcrumbs or panko
- ½ cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Position a rack in the center of the oven

and heat the oven to 450°F.

In a small bowl, combine 2 Tbs. of the oil and about two-thirds of the minced garlic. Brush the insides of the mushroom caps with the garlic oil and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Arrange the mushrooms oiled side up on a rimmed baking sheet and roast until just tender, about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, mix the cream cheese, mayonnaise, and ½ tsp. of the thyme with the back of a wooden spoon. Stir in the spinach and artichokes and season to taste with salt and pepper. In another medium bowl, combine the remaining garlic, 1 Tbs. oil, and 1 tsp. thyme with the breadcrumbs and cheese.

Spoon the artichoke mixture evenly into the mushroom caps and sprinkle with the breadcrumb mixture. Bake until the crumbs are golden-brown and the filling is hot, about 10 minutes. Serve immediately.

—Pam Anderson

Laughed over seconds.

Shared stories over firsts.

Saved the best for last.



oranges in cardamom syrup with honey whipped cream

With just five ingredients, this simple dessert comes together in no time. Serves 4 to 6

- 4 large navel oranges, cut into segments
(see Test Kitchen, p. 89)**
- ¼ cup granulated sugar**
- ¼ tsp. ground cardamom**
- ½ cup heavy cream**
- 2 tsp. honey**

Drain the orange segments in a strainer set over a medium bowl. Set the segments and juice aside.

Put the sugar in a small heavy-duty saucepan over medium heat and cook, stirring often, until melted and light amber in color, 3 to 5 minutes. Take the pan off the heat and whisk in the orange juice. The mixture will bubble and clump; whisk until smooth again. Stir in the cardamom.

Put the orange segments in the juice bowl and add the syrup. Toss well.

In a large bowl, whisk 1 Tbs. of the cream with the honey until smooth. Add the remaining cream and beat with an electric hand mixer on high speed until soft peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes.

Divide the oranges and syrup among serving bowls. Top with the whipped cream.

—Bruce Weinstein
and Mark Scarbrough

For a delicious variation, try substituting blood oranges for the navel oranges.



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McCormick Gourmet Collection Chocolate Crackled Cookies

Ingredients

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 12 oz. semi-sweet baking chocolate, divided | 1 tsp. Ancho Chile Pepper | 1/2 cup granulated sugar |
| 3/4 cup flour | 1/2 tsp. baking powder | 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar |
| 2 tsp. Roasted Saigon Cinnamon | 1/4 tsp. salt | 2 eggs, lightly beaten |
| | 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter, softened | 2 tsp. Pure Vanilla Extract |

Directions

MELT 8 oz. of the chocolate as directed on package. Set aside. Coarsely chop remaining 4 oz. chocolate. Mix flour, roasted cinnamon, ancho chile pepper, baking powder and salt in small bowl.

BEAT butter and sugars in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add eggs and vanilla; mix well. Add melted chocolate; beat until well blended. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Stir in chopped chocolate. Drop dough by rounded tablespoons 1 1/2 inches apart on parchment paper-lined baking sheets.

BAKE in preheated 375°F oven about 10 minutes or just until cookies are set and slightly cracked on top. Transfer cookies on parchment paper to wire rack; cool completely. Makes 3 1/2 dozen.

For more delicious holiday menu ideas, visit mccormickgourmet.com



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Cranberry Apple Pie

Cooking the berries, sugar and orange peel with flour before you pour it over the apples gives the pie a better texture and flavor. Chopped pecans add a nice crunch. This tasty combination is perfectly matched with the healthy whole grains in the crust.

PIE CRUST

2 cups (8 1/2 ounces) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
1 cup (4 ounces) King Arthur Unbleached White Whole Wheat Flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons sugar (optional)
1/2 cup (3 1/4 ounces) vegetable shortening
1/2 cup (4 ounces) cold butter
6 to 9 tablespoons (3 to 4 1/2 ounces) ice water

In a large bowl, whisk together the flours, salt and sugar if using. With a pastry blender, two knives, or your fingertips, cut the shortening into the flour mixture until it resembles cornmeal. Dice the butter into cubes and cut in until the largest pieces are the size of a dime. Sprinkle the ice water over the flour/fat mixture, tossing with a fork, using 2 tablespoons at a time. Continue until the dough is just moist enough to hold together. Gather it into a ball, cut it in half and flatten the halves into two disks. Wrap the pieces of dough and refrigerate to give them a rest for 30 minutes or more before rolling them out.

PIE FILLING

1 1/2 cups (5 1/4 ounces) chopped cranberries
1 cup (7 ounces) sugar
1/2 teaspoon grated orange peel (zest)
1 tablespoon King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
1/3 cup (2 5/8 ounces) orange or cranberry juice
6 tablespoons (1 1/2 ounces) chopped pecans
3 firm, tart apples, peeled, cored and sliced
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon butter

Preheat your oven to 425°F. Lightly grease a 9-inch pie plate, and line with half the pie dough from above. Refrigerate the crust while you make the filling. In a medium saucepan, cook the cranberries with the sugar, orange peel, flour and juice until the mixture is slightly thickened; remove from heat and cool. Sprinkle half the pecans in the bottom of the prepared pie plate. Make 2 layers of apples on top of the nuts. Sprinkle these with cinnamon and dot with butter. Pour the cooled cranberry mixture over the apples and sprinkle on the remaining pecans. Cover with a latticed top. Bake for 30 minutes or until the crust is golden and the berries are bubbly. Remove from the oven and cool before slicing.

Yield: 1 pie, 8 slices

More recipes at kingarthurflour.com/recipe



It's essential to use "dry" scallops for this dish; they haven't been soaked in a sodium solution, so they'll brown better.

seared scallops with warm radicchio and pancetta

Radicchio's bitterness mellows once it's cooked, making it a sweet, tender bed for the scallops. **Serves 2 as a main course; 4 as an appetizer**

- 1 large head radicchio (about 14 oz.)**
- 2 Tbs. cider vinegar**
- 2 tsp. granulated sugar**
- 12 large all-natural "dry" scallops, side muscles removed**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 6 oz. pancetta, cut into small dice**
- Olive oil, as needed**
- ½ medium red onion, thinly sliced through the root end**
- 1 Tbs. minced fresh rosemary**
- 1 large clove garlic, chopped**

Remove the outer leaves from the radicchio and cut the head in half through the root end. Cut each half into 4 wedges through the root end and remove the white core.

In a small bowl, stir the vinegar and sugar until dissolved.

Pat the scallops dry and season with salt and pepper. Heat a 12-inch skillet (preferably cast iron) over medium heat until hot. Add the

pancetta and cook, stirring often, until crisp, about 5 minutes. Remove the pancetta from the skillet with a slotted spoon. Pour off all but 3 Tbs. of the fat (if you have less than 3 Tbs., add olive oil to make up the difference).

Put the skillet over medium-high heat. Add the scallops and sear until golden-brown on one side, 2 to 3 minutes. Flip and continue to cook on the second side until they feel firm when pressed, 2 to 3 minutes more. Transfer to a plate, cover, and keep warm.

Add the onion and rosemary to the skillet and cook, stirring often, until the onion is softened, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, 15 seconds. Add the radicchio and pancetta, season with salt and pepper, and cook, tossing gently and occasionally, until the radicchio is wilted, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and pour the vinegar mixture over the radicchio. Toss to combine. Serve with the scallops.

—Ivy Manning



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MARKETPLACE

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TRY THIS

Cardoons

SURE, THEY HAVE SHAGGY LEAVES, SPINY STALKS, and look like a ragged bunch of overgrown celery, but there's a reason cardoons are prized in Italy, France, and Spain, where they often appear on holiday tables. A type of edible thistle, flavorful cardoons have an appealing, slightly bitter taste with notes of celery and artichoke (they're a relative of the latter). They're also versatile: You can eat them puréed, sautéed, braised, and fried. Pick some up from late fall through winter, and they might just make their way onto your holiday table, too.

Continued on page 20

**TRY THIS** CARDOONS**They're edible and ornamental**

Native to southern Europe and North Africa, cardoons (*Cynara cardunculus*) are perennial plants with fleshy, edible stalks that can grow up to 6 feet tall. They produce silvery-green leaves and flower buds that are similar to those of an artichoke, though they're usually not eaten. These buds bloom into large purple thistle-like flowers, which can provide a striking element in garden design.

The more inner stalks, the better

Cardoons grow in bunches, like celery, and should have wide, plump, gray-green stalks. Choose bunches with plenty of inner stalks, which will be more tender than those on the

outside. Refrigerate cardoons in a plastic bag for up to two weeks.

Peel first, then prep as you please

Begin by separating the cardoon bunch into stalks; discard any tough outer stalks or narrow, leafy ones from the center. Use a paring knife to trim away spines and leaves and to shave off the inedible fibrous exterior from each stalk. If you don't plan to use the peeled cardoons immediately, keep them in acidulated water (a mixture of water and an acid, such as lemon juice or vinegar) to prevent discoloration.

Parboiling trimmed cardoons before using other cooking methods will reduce their

bitter flavor and make them more tender.

Parboiled cardoons can be sautéed, added to creamy gratins, braised with herbs, puréed, grilled, or lightly battered and deep-fried. You can also toss them with a vinaigrette or try them dipped in bagna cauda, an Italian sauce made with cooked anchovies and garlic. Cardoons pair well with béchamel, truffles, and truffle oil and are complemented by cheeses like Parmigiano-Reggiano (see the recipe below) and fontina.

—Melissa Denchak



Get information on hundreds of ingredients at FineCooking.com/ingredients.

cardoons with garlic butter and parmesan

These tender, juicy garlic-infused cardoons pair deliciously with everything from an elegant leg of lamb to pan-seared pork chops or chicken for a weeknight meal. Serves 4

Kosher salt

- 1 medium bunch cardoons (about 1½ lb.)
- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 2 medium cloves garlic, smashed and peeled
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- 3 Tbs. finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- Freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat.

Meanwhile, prepare the cardoons: Cut the base off the bunch to separate it into stalks, and discard any tough outer stalks or narrow leafy stalks from the center. With a paring knife, shave the stringy outer layer off each stalk. Cut the trimmed stalks crosswise into 1-inch pieces.

Cook the cardoons in the boiling water until tender, about 12 minutes. Drain well. (The cardoons can be prepared to this point up to 4 hours ahead.)

In a 10-inch skillet, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Add the garlic and cook over medium heat, pressing the cloves with a fork, until just beginning to color, about 2 minutes. Remove the garlic with the fork and discard.

Add the pepper flakes to the butter, wait about 15 seconds, and then add the cardoons. Cook, tossing, until heated through, about 1 minute. Toss with the Parmigiano, season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve. —Jennifer Armentrout



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AT THE MARKET

What we're cooking now

Fine Cooking editors (and a reader) share some delicious ideas for in-season ingredients.



Roasted Broccoli with Sesame-Soy Sauce

Toss broccoli florets with olive oil and roast in a hot oven until tender and lightly browned. Toss with a sauce made from sesame oil, soy sauce, rice vinegar, sugar, and toasted sesame seeds.

—Melissa Denchak

Lemony Roast Chicken

Using your fingers, rub grated lemon zest into kosher salt until well combined. Rub the lemon salt all over the skin and inside the cavity of a whole chicken. Stuff a few lemon halves into the cavity. Refrigerate the chicken, uncovered, from a few hours to overnight. Brush the chicken with melted butter, season with black pepper, and roast in a hot oven until just cooked through.

—Denise Mickelsen

Collard Greens with Pumpkin Seeds and Raisins

In a skillet, sauté minced garlic in olive oil until fragrant. Add trimmed and very thinly sliced collard greens and a pinch of salt, cover, and cook until the collards wilt. Stir in balsamic vinegar, toasted pumpkin seeds, and raisins.

—Lisa Waddle

Warm Roquefort, Pear, and Leek Sandwich

Sauté thinly sliced leeks in butter until tender; season with salt and pepper. Slice a baguette in half horizontally, without cutting all the way through, and brush the inside with melted butter. Spread the leeks on the bottom half, top with thinly sliced pears, and sprinkle with crumbled Roquefort. Heat in a warm oven until the cheese is melted.

—Julissa Roberts

Butter-Braised Belgian Endives

Melt a generous amount of butter in a sauté pan over medium-low heat. Arrange trimmed and halved endives cut side down in a snug single layer, sprinkle with lemon juice, season with salt and pepper, and add water to come a third of the way up their sides. Cover and simmer until tender. Remove the lid, raise the heat, and cook until any remaining liquid evaporates and the endives brown. Flip and brown the other side. Serve sprinkled with sliced chives.

—Jennifer Armentrout

Tangerine Sparkler

Pour 3 fl. oz. fresh tangerine juice and 1 fl. oz. Aperol (an Italian aperitif) into a Champagne flute, and top with Prosecco. Garnish with tangerine slices.

—Evan Barbour



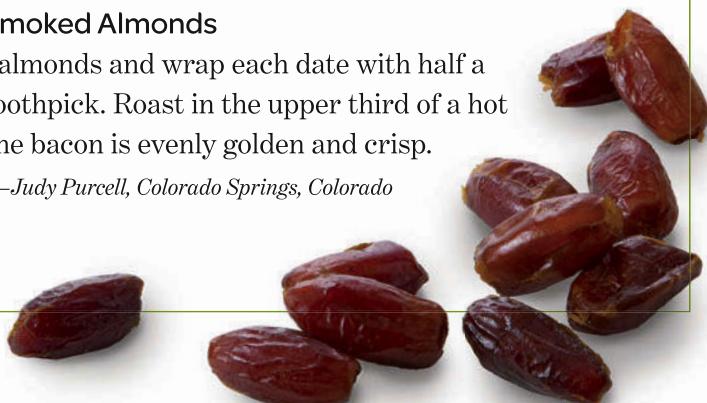
ONE READER'S SEASONAL SPECIALTY



Bacon-wrapped Dates with Smoked Almonds

Stuff pitted dates with smoked almonds and wrap each date with half a bacon slice, securing it with a toothpick. Roast in the upper third of a hot oven, turning as needed, until the bacon is evenly golden and crisp.

—Judy Purcell, Colorado Springs, Colorado





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BIG BUY COOKING

Roasted Red Peppers

In winter, the tastiest peppers come from a jar.

BY MELISSA PELLEGRINO

THE HOLIDAYS ARE HERE, and party food is the order of the season. For a simple, sure-fire way to add bright flavor to your festive fare, grab that giant jar of roasted red peppers the next time you're at the warehouse store. Typically packed in water, these peppers are roasted, peeled, and seeded and have a rich, smoky sweetness. With a jar on hand—especially in winter, when fresh bell peppers are out of season—you can whip up all sorts of easy, tasty treats, including the finger food here. From mini burgers to mini muffins, dips, crostini, and savory skewers, roasted red peppers can be used for so much. Stock up, and you'll be party-ready.

The Big Buy

What: Water-packed roasted red peppers.

How much: A 32-oz. jar.

How to store: Refrigerate in their jar, submerged in their water. They will keep for about two weeks.

mini burgers with roasted red pepper relish

These juicy little burgers get a double dose of roasted red pepper flavor: The chunky spicy-sweet relish that's spooned on top is also mixed into the meat. To serve as a party snack, double the recipe. **Yields 9 mini burgers**

- 6 Tbs. sherry vinegar
- 3 Tbs. granulated sugar
- 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more as needed
- 1 large shallot, finely chopped (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)
- 1 serrano chile, seeded and minced
- Kosher salt
- 1½ cups small-diced roasted red peppers, patted dry (2 to 3 peppers)
- 1½ tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lb. ground beef (85% lean)
- 9 small soft dinner rolls or mini burger rolls, split

Mix the sherry vinegar and sugar in a small bowl until the sugar is dissolved.

Heat the oil in a 1-quart saucepan over medium heat. Add the shallot, serrano, and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the shallot is tender and translucent, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the roasted red peppers and cook for 1 minute. Add the vinegar mixture and simmer until the liquid is mostly evaporated, 7 to 9 minutes. Stir in the thyme, season to taste with salt and pepper, and let cool to room temperature.

Position a rack 6 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler on high.

Put the ground beef in a mixing bowl and add ½ cup of the relish, 1 tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper. Mix gently and briefly to avoid overworking the meat. Shape the beef into nine ½-inch-thick patties.

Lightly oil a broiler pan. Arrange the burgers on the pan and broil until lightly browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Flip the burgers and broil until lightly browned and cooked to medium doneness (140°F), about 2 minutes.

Serve the burgers in the rolls, topped with the remaining relish.





corn muffins with roasted red peppers, scallions, and cheddar

Like corn bread? Then you'll love these savory, two-bite muffins, which get subtle sweetness and a hearty texture from polenta, or corn grits, a medium-grind cornmeal. Packed with aged Cheddar, rich roasted red peppers, and nutty brown butter, they're perfect as a nibble on their own or with a bowl of spicy chili. **Yields 24 mini muffins**

Cooking spray

- 3 oz. (6 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- 3 ½ oz. (¾ cup) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 3 ½ oz. (½ cup plus 2 Tbs.) stone-ground polenta, such as Bob's Red Mill corn grits
- 2 oz. aged Cheddar, grated (about ½ cup)
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 large eggs
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup finely diced roasted red peppers
- 1 medium scallion, finely chopped

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Generously coat a 24-cup mini muffin pan with cooking spray. **Melt the butter in a heavy-duty 1-quart saucepan** over medium heat. Cook, swirling the pan occasionally, until the butter turns a nutty golden-brown, about 4 minutes. Pour into a small bowl and let cool.

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, polenta, Cheddar, baking powder, 1 tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper.

In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the eggs and sugar on medium speed until pale yellow and thickened, 3 to 4 minutes. Reduce the speed to low. Add a third of the dry ingredients, then half of the melted butter, mixing after each addition until just incorporated. Alternately add the remaining flour and butter, mixing after each addition, and ending with the dry ingredients. Stir in the roasted red peppers and scallions by hand.

Spoon the batter into the prepared muffin pan (about 1 Tbs. per muffin). Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean, 10 to 15 minutes.

Let cool on a wire rack for 15 minutes and then unmold. Serve warm.

MAKE AHEAD

The muffins may be baked up to 8 hours in advance. To reheat, wrap in foil and heat in a 350°F oven until warm, 7 to 10 minutes.

Three simple ideas for roasted red peppers

Shrimp, Roasted Red Pepper, and Chorizo Skewers

Toss shrimp with olive oil, lemon zest, salt, pepper, and smoked paprika. Thread the shrimp on skewers with thick slices of roasted red pepper and chunks of chorizo. Broil until cooked through and browned.

Kale, Roasted Red Pepper, and Mozzarella Crostini

Sauté coarsely chopped kale, salt, and red pepper flakes in olive oil until tender. Add diced roasted red peppers and cook until warmed through. Top slices of toasted baguette with sliced mozzarella and the kale mixture.



White Bean and Roasted Red Pepper Dip

In a food processor, purée cannellini beans, roasted red peppers, fresh sage leaves, garlic, and extra-virgin olive oil until smooth and creamy. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with toasted pita chips.



For more recipes using roasted red peppers, go to FineCooking.com/extras.



Great Finds

Our latest buys for the kitchen and table.

BY MELISSA DENCHAK



Clutter-Free Cooking

The Recipe Rock holds recipe cards and 8x11-inch printouts upright and perfectly angled for easy, hands-free reading. Just place your recipe between the small, concave magnetized "rock" and the metal ball that comes with it. **\$9.95; broadwaypanhandler.com; 866-266-5927.**



Half-Pint Pottery

Festive and elegant, these snowflake-embossed 8-oz. cocottes from Le Creuset are perfect for holiday hosting. Made from durable enameled stoneware, they can be used for individual gratins, pot pies, French onion soup, shirred eggs, puddings, or crème brûlée. **\$60 for three; lecreuset.com; 877-418-5547.**



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Move Over, Bacon

A less expensive take on *guanciale* (an Italian bacon made from pork cheeks), Surry Farms' Jowciale is buttery rich and deliciously porky. It adds great flavor to spaghetti carbonara, black-eyed peas, and vegetable sautés. **\$23.95 for 1.5 pounds; surryfarms.com; 888-901-4267.**

Fungi for Dessert?

These candy cap mushrooms, foraged in the Pacific Northwest, have an intense maple aroma and a slight earthy flavor that lends itself surprisingly well to desserts. Steep the dried mushrooms in cream for panna cotta or ganache or grind them to sprinkle over ice cream. Prefer something savory? Use them in a creamy pan sauce for pork chops. **\$26 for a 1-oz. bag; marxfoods.com; 866-588-6279.**



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BOOKS THAT COOK

The Reading List

New must-reads for food lovers. BY RAQUEL PELZEL

Essential Pépin

More than 700 All-Time Favorites from My Life in Food

By Jacques Pépin
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$40

Over his 60-year professional cooking career, Jacques Pépin has created thousands of recipes, written 26 cookbooks, and taught America how to cook via three decades of television shows. Now, finally, he has put together his greatest hits, so to speak, in one gorgeous cookbook. With more than 700 sophisticated yet straightforward recipes, Pépin chronicles his career as a chef and cooking teacher, and offers readers a fascinating glimpse into how food has evolved over the last half-century. Mushrooms Stuffed with Escargots comes from Pépin's days cooking at Paris's Plaza Athénée in the 1950s; Chicken with Cognac Sauce was a specialty of the Pavillon restaurant in New York City, where Pépin first worked when he came to this country in 1959; My Mother's Chicken Ragoût stems from his childhood, of course; and the Fresh Corn Soufflé is a perfect example of how his classical French training fused with his adopted American ingredient-driven practicality. In addition to the stories, the techniques (the book comes with a three-hour instructional DVD), and the recipes, there are hundreds of Pépin's own whimsical line drawings, which bring a homey humbleness to this epic volume.

Tasting Notes

Cucumbers with Tarragon (page 428) Cooked cucumbers? Absolutely. This easy, surprisingly elegant side dish is buttery and undeniably good.

Poached Salmon in Ravigote Sauce (page 196) Masterful in its simplicity, salmon is poached in water and topped with a raw tomato sauce loaded with scallions, lemon, and capers.

The Country Cooking of Italy

By Colman Andrews
Chronicle Books, \$50

This book, the third in a series and the second by award-winning journalist and author Colman Andrews, is all about simple, pure Italian cooking. Forgoing sophisticated, citified dishes, Andrews focuses on rustic fare made by Mamma. Based on more than 40 years of traveling and eating in Italy, it's a cookbook, travelogue, and memoir all rolled into one. At its heart are 250 soulful recipes that

Andrews picked up along the way, written in a charming "I don't believe much in exact measurements" manner. Some dishes you'll know, like Grilled Pork Chops with Garlic and Rosemary, and some you won't, like Casunziei, a beet and turnip ravioli from the Veneto region. What moves the book along are Andrews's history-heavy accounts, slice-of-life stories, and thoughtful chapter introductions. With humor, reverence, and mouthwatering photography, this book brings readers into the villages of Italy to celebrate the country dishes that the big cities might try to reinvent, but that are otherwise truly irreplaceable.

Tasting Notes

Mozzarella in Carrozza (page 34) Crisp and unforgettable, these battered and fried fresh mozzarella-stuffed sandwiches are easy enough for lunch and extraordinary enough for company.

Spaghetti with Shrimp and Pistachio Pesto

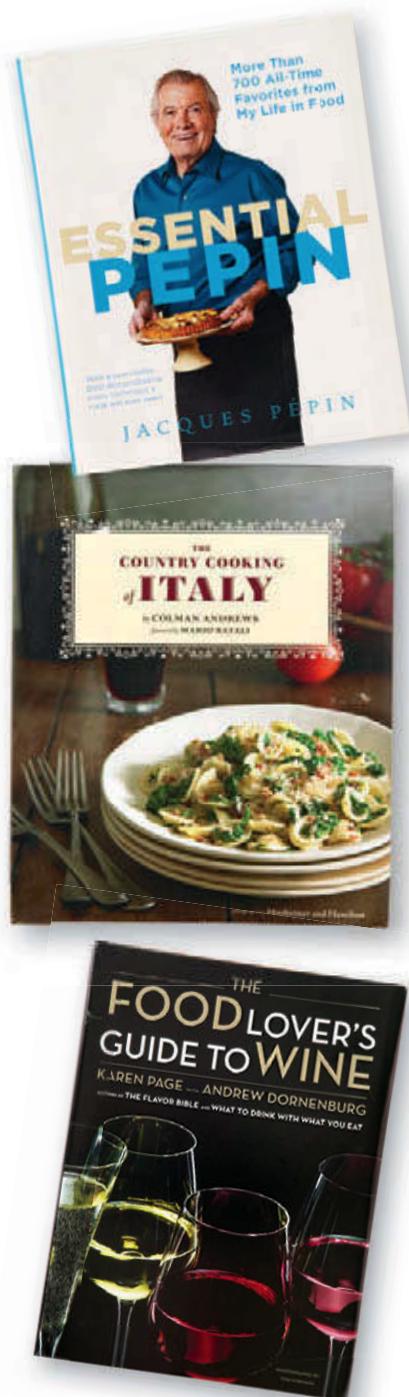
(page 97) This dish counts on the richness of pistachios to give Genovese-style basil pesto a new slant. Tossed with al dente spaghetti and small, sweet shrimp, it's at once familiar and different, and quite delicious.

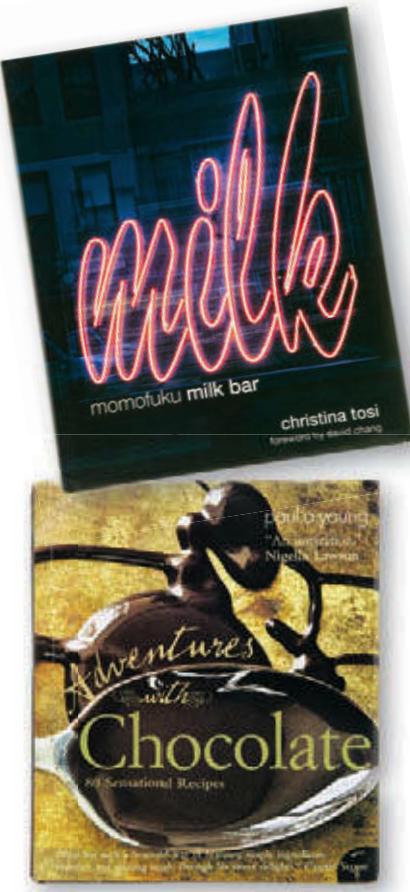
The Food Lover's Guide to Wine

By Karen Page and Andrew Dornenburg
Little, Brown and Company, \$35

In this sequel to their award-winning *What to Drink with What You Eat*, husband and wife team Karen Page and Andrew Dornenburg invite readers to join them on another friendly journey into the world of wine and food. In an A-to-Z format, their book profiles hundreds of wines, focusing for the most part on flavor and how the wines pair with food. Their premise—that food lovers know flavor and therefore have the chops to understand, discover, and choose great wines to go with their meals—allows the authors to leave behind confusing wine statistics, vintages, critical wine scores, and tongue-tying wine classifications. Instead, they enliven their wine story-telling by going straight to the country's foremost sommeliers for food and wine pairing guidance. The book's chatty armchair tone is authoritative yet approachable, and sidebars such as Understanding a Wine's Personality, which assigns personas to wines, are playful entry points to understanding how wine fits into a meal.

Continued on page 30





Momofuku Milk Bar

By Christina Tosi
Clarkson Potter, \$35

Christina Tosi, the pastry chef and co-owner of New York City's Momofuku Milk Bar, has the remarkable ability to render otherwise jaded New Yorkers giddy with sugary glee, thanks to salty-sweet treats like Crack Pie, Cereal Milk Ice Cream, and her outrageous potato chip, chocolate chip, butterscotch, oat, coffee, and pretzel Compost Cookies. But you no longer have to visit the Big Apple to taste Tosi's fantastical creations; now you can make them yourself from her first cookbook. It's a daring book, as most of the recipes require making one, two, or even five other recipes to get them done (for example, Candy Bar Pie calls for Salty Caramel, Chocolate Crust, and Peanut Butter Nougat, in addition to a small handful of ingredients to make the pie). And Tosi calls for unusual ingredients—think freeze-dried corn, glucose, leaf gelatin, and milk powder—as if they're flour and sugar. But her flavor combinations and riffs on childhood classics are so ingenious, and so delicious, that many bakers will find them well worth the effort.

Tasting Notes

Compost Cookies (page 114) Sweet, salty, butter-scotchy deliciousness abounds in every bite. Stick to the ingredient list—mini chocolate and butterscotch chips and mini pretzels are key for the right texture and flavor.

Hot Fudge Sauce (page 136) This sauce is silky, thick, glossy perfection. Perfect for pouring over ice cream, cake, or simply eating by the spoonful.

Adventures with Chocolate

80 Sensational Recipes
By Paul A. Young
Kyle Books, \$24.95

British chocolatier Paul Young, who worked with the legendary chef Marco Pierre White before opening his three London chocolate shops, is known for his experimental, bold chocolate flavor pairings. It's those intriguing combinations that make this cookbook, his first, quite the chocolate-covered ride. The front of the book is dedicated to the hows of working with chocolate, including Young's 10 steps to tasting chocolate, how to best use single-origin chocolates (he prefers cacao beans grown in one place rather than mass-produced blends), and his truffle-making technique. Then Young shares his recipes for everything from brownies and truffles to cocktails and a one-pot chicken dinner. Each recipe is based on his extensive tasting and testing of single-origin chocolates in unusual flavor combinations, be it a fruity Madagascan chocolate ganache with Marmite, or a fragrant Venezuelan chocolate sandwich with bacon, butter, and Stilton. Perfect for serious chocophiles, this beautifully photographed book will have you craving cacao from page one.

Tasting Notes

Paul's Venezuelan Chocolate Chile Chicken (page 120) In this super quick, exotic take on a mole, fresh chiles bring a mellow heat that's softened by dark chocolate, which in turn, is mellowed by ground chile powder. It's a surprisingly nuanced and complex dish, considering that it takes less than an hour to make.

Chocolate Ginger and Cardamom Tea Bread

(page 77) This is a wonderfully rich and spicy take on gingerbread cake, made with Assam tea and more than a half-pound of crystallized ginger. Serve with a cup of hot chocolate and get ready for chocolate heaven.

Raquel Pelzel is a Brooklyn-based food writer, cookbook author, and blogger at raqintheKitchen.com.



For recipes from these and other cookbooks, visit FineCooking.com.

Books from Our Contributors

Three of our regular writers have new books worth checking out.

Ellie Krieger's Comfort Food Fix (Wiley, \$29.99) offers 150 better-for-you recipes for American comfort food classics, as well as simple tips and tricks for boosting flavor without adding calories and saturated fat. Thanks to Ellie, now you can have your mac and cheese, banana pudding, and pancakes, and eat them, too.

In **Bi-Rite Market's Eat Good Food** (Ten Speed Press, \$32.50), Dabney Gough and Sam Mogannam, the second generation owner of San Francisco's popular Bi-Rite Market, walk us through the store, department by department, explaining how to choose and use the best ingredients and sharing the market's best recipes. It's a cookbook-shopping guide hybrid that will inspire you straight to the store, and then to the kitchen.

All About Roasting: A New Approach to a Classic Art (W.W. Norton, \$35) is master teacher Molly Stevens's latest cookbook. Stevens serves up 150 recipes for roasts of all kinds—from beef, lamb, pork, and poultry to seafood and vegetables—and shares her secrets for juicy, well-seared, succulent meats, caramelized drippings, and intense flavors. Recipes range from the cozy and familiar (Sunday Supper Roast Chicken and Crispy Roasted Potatoes) to the more ambitious (Oven-Roasted Porchetta).

—Denise Mickelsen and Melissa Denchak

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New Year's Wine Resolutions

Start the year with five new ways to drink well outside the box.

BY ALDER YARROW

COME JANUARY FIRST, you can start eating better and probably even find time to clean out the garage. But wouldn't it be far more enjoyable to focus your New Year's efforts on drinking really good wine? Here are five wine resolutions that will help you fill your glass with something great in 2012.

Visit the Ancient World

Before there was the Old World, there was the ancient world. Humans have been messing around with fermented fruit for almost 6,000 years now, and while no one is sure exactly where wine was first made, most signs point to near today's Republic of Georgia. From there, winemaking spread quickly to the parts of the world currently occupied by Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Iran, and Israel, among others. These regions are home to grape varieties found nowhere else (Kolorko from Turkey and Obaideh from Lebanon, for starters), and they produce unique wines worth seeking out, not only for their wonderfully different flavors (lemon oil, sometimes a hint of parchment), but because their obscurity is often reflected in their prices.

Escape from California

It's all too easy to keep buying the same old reliable California wines every time you drop by the wine shop. And if Zinfandel is your thing, you won't find many options from elsewhere in the United States. But if you're looking for a little variety when it comes to other reds and whites, go north.

Oregon's Willamette Valley has been making world-class Pinot Noir for decades, while Washington turns out fantastic red wines of many kinds, along with some excellent Riesling. For reasons not entirely clear, these states receive far less attention from wine lovers than they should. Choose a wine from one of these regions and chances are you'll be getting a great bottle for less than you'd spend on one of its California counterparts.



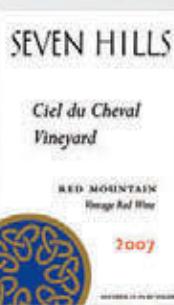
2009 The Royal Tokaji Wine Company Dry Furmint, Tokaj-Hegyalja, Hungary (\$15)

With aromas of citrus, herbs, and honey, this white wine offers flavors of apples, pears, and white flowers that dance across the palate.



2003 Château Musar Hochar Père et Fils Red, Bekaa Valley, Lebanon (\$25)

Velvety in texture, this wine has flavors of sour cherry and red berries, as well as deeper leather and earthy notes. Great acidity means it will age beautifully, if you can resist drinking it now.



2007 Seven Hills Ciel du Cheval Vineyard Red Wine, Red Mountain, Washington (\$30)

This juicy concoction of black cherry, cassis, and violets has a brightness that makes it easy to drink. Faint tannins and minerality add complexity.



2008 Forefront (by Pine Ridge Vineyards) Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, Oregon (\$20)

A deep, wet earthiness pervades this wine's bouquet of cranberry and raspberry fruit. Bright acidity makes it a wonderful food wine.

Try an Orange Wine

You didn't know that wine came in a color other than white, red, or pink? Then it's time you got in on one of the wine world's best-kept secrets. Obscure as can be and definitely the province of serious wine geeks, orange wines are some of the most fascinating, food-friendly, and delicious wines on the planet.

Put simply, orange wines are white wines that are treated like red wines during the winemaking process. Just as red wines get their color when the red grape juice is left in contact with the pigment-filled skins, orange wines get their iced-tea coloring from leaving the skins of the white grapes in contact with the juice, sometimes for months on end. This imparts not only stunning color but also remarkable aromatics and tannins, which make these wines a good match for all kinds of foods, including grilled seafood, lamb and pork, and risotto. Be sure to decant an orange wine for 5 to 24 hours before serving it with dinner, preferably gently chilled. The air softens the tannins and makes the flavors rounder and more complex.



2009 Monastero Suore Cistercensi Coenobium Rusticum Lazio IGT, Lazio, Italy (\$25)
Smelling of orange rind and honey-roasted nuts, this wine offers everything from mango to saffron flavors draped over a sprightly mineral backbone.

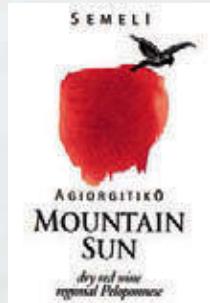


2003 Gravner Breg Anfora Venezia Giulia IGT, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy (\$105)
This is the ultimate orange wine and well worth the splurge. Its otherworldly aroma has notes of bee pollen, honey, and roasted nuts, and its wet stone and tangerine zest flavors mix with exotic resins for a mysterious, alluring finish.

Drink Unfamiliar Grapes

Most wine lovers go their entire drinking lives tasting within the narrow confines of the usual wine grape suspects like Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Sauvignon Blanc. While these varietals do produce some of the world's most sought-after wines, they represent only the tiniest fraction of the world's grapes.

A veritable jungle of variety is waiting to be explored by intrepid drinkers willing to stray further afield. Savor the rose petal elegance of Gewürztraminer, or the brooding darkness of Mencia or Mourvèdre. Try the searing minerality of Greece's Assyrtiko, or the explosive, juicy berry flavors of Agiorgitiko. Taste the citrus spice of Ribolla Gialla (grown in Spain or Slovenia), or the neon-lemon burst of Sémillon. And don't miss the crushed stone and red currant notes of Sicily's Nerello Mascalese, and the floral and stone fruit wonderland of Grenache Blanc. Exploration often bears unanticipated fruit, if you'll pardon the expression.



2008 Semeli Orinos Helios (Mountain Sun) Red Agiorgitiko, Nemea, Greece (\$13)
This juicy red wine has mulberry and blueberry notes set against earthy flavors, soft tannins, and excellent acidity. A great match for fish.



2008 Movia Ribolla Gialla, Goriska Brda, Slovenia (\$26)
There is a wonderful balance between floral and mineral qualities in this white wine, and its dry, sappy flavor bears a hint of exotic spice.

Choose Sparkling Reds

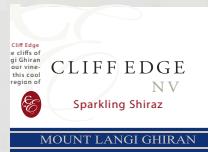
If you think sparkling wines are festive, just wait until you've tried one that's bright red. Americans had a brief flirtation with sparkling red wines a few decades ago, and with Lambrusco, a style of sparkling red from the Emilia-Romagna region in central Italy, in particular. But drinkers quickly fell out of love with it because, at the time, Lambrusco was fairly sweet and one-dimensional. Since then, the rest of the world has moved on from that style of Lambrusco, and today, Italy produces some wonderfully dry, complex, and simply joyful renditions.

For another sparkling red option, head farther south. Even as you read this, Australians are keeping cool during their summer by drinking chilled glasses of sparkling Shiraz. Not much makes it to the United States, but if you're looking for a good time Aussie-style, you don't have to look further than this fizzy dark red.

Alder Yarrow is the founder and writer of the award-winning wine blog vinography.com.



2009 Medici Ermete Le Tenute Solo Reggiano, Emilia-Romagna, Italy (\$15)
This Lambrusco's faintly fizzy combination of fresh berries and nuts is earthy and almost meaty, rather than sweet. The slightly more "serious" profile doesn't make it any less fun to drink, however.



NV Mount Langi Ghiran Cliff Edge NV Sparkling Shiraz, Grampians, Australia (\$27)
Dark and juicy, as Shiraz should be, but with boisterous bubbles and just a hint of sweetness. Bright blackberry and darker woody, earthy flavors round things out.



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REPERTOIRE

HOW TO MAKE

Gingerbread Cookies

A classic holiday cookie that every baker should know how to make. BY CAROLYN WEIL

WHEN I WAS ELEVEN, I LEARNED HOW TO MAKE GINGERBREAD cookies in the kitchen of family friends. I fell for the cookies' intoxicating spiced aroma and have made them nearly every winter since—first for relatives and neighbors, later for customers at my own bakery.

Gingerbread is a spiced sweet that dates back to the Middle Ages. The classic cookie is dense, heavy on ginger, and usually flavored with molasses. My recipe (see page 36) is traditional, though I've refined it over the years. I've adjusted the spice mix to boost the pepperiness of

the ginger and intensify the cinnamon aroma, and I use just enough nutmeg and cloves to round things out. I opt for mild molasses instead of blackstrap and have taken to using orange zest for an added layer of complexity. I've also figured out how to best work with this somewhat sticky dough and have developed a foolproof royal icing that makes for easy decorating. The result? A recipe that's sure to become a keeper in your kitchen, too.



To help the cutouts maintain their shape, use a large offset spatula to transfer them to the cookie sheet.

Need to Know

Use mild molasses, not blackstrap. Molasses is the thick liquid that's left after sugar has been extracted from sugar cane juice. Blackstrap molasses is very dark, sticky, and somewhat bitter, and can overpower other flavors. Mild molasses is golden-brown and sweeter but still has a kick that pairs nicely with spices like ginger and cinnamon.

Consider the age of your spices. Ground spices last about a year; after that, they're less flavorful. Restock your cabinet if you think your spices might be old, and use freshly grated whole spices, like nutmeg, whenever possible.

Freeze the dough and roll it in batches. Freezing the dough makes it firm and less sticky. To keep it that way, work with one-quarter of the dough at a time and leave the rest in the freezer. Try to roll the dough no thicker than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, or the cookies will be more chewy than crunchy.

Re-roll but don't overwork the scraps. You can gather and re-roll the dough scraps once. After that, press any remaining scraps into a new portion of dough; this will prevent them from being overworked, tough, and dried out.

Add cream of tartar to the royal icing. Although decorative royal icing is usually made with just egg whites and confectioners' sugar, adding cream of tartar stabilizes the icing and makes it thicker and easier to handle.

3 Ways to Make Ahead

- **Freeze** the dough, wrapped in plastic, for up to 4 weeks. If frozen solid, let sit at room temperature for 15 minutes before rolling it out.
- **Refrigerate** the royal icing with a layer of plastic wrap pressed directly on its surface for up to a week. Stir before using it.
- **Store** baked and decorated cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days.

COOK'S TIP



There's more than one way to pipe icing. A pastry bag fitted with a small tip is the most common piping tool, but you can also use a plastic squeeze bottle or a small plastic bag with a tiny bit of the corner trimmed off.

gingerbread cookies

This recipe calls for a 4 1/4-inch cookie cutter, but you can use any size; just keep in mind that the baking time and yield will vary. Yields about 4 dozen 4 1/4-inch cookies

FOR THE COOKIES

- 15 1/4 oz. (3 1/2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more as needed
- 2 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp. ground cloves
- 1/4 tsp. table salt
- 4 oz. (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 3/4 cup mild molasses
- 1 Tbs. finely grated orange zest (from about 1 1/2 large oranges)

FOR THE ROYAL ICING

- 8 oz. (2 cups) confectioners' sugar
- 2 tsp. powdered egg whites
- 1/4 tsp. cream of tartar

MAKE THE COOKIES

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and salt.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment,

beat the butter and brown sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add the egg, mixing until combined, then add the molasses and orange zest and beat on medium speed until smooth, stopping to scrape the bowl as necessary, about 2 minutes. On low speed, slowly add the dry ingredients and mix just until the flour is incorporated, scraping the bowl as necessary, about 2 minutes. The dough will be very stiff and sticky.

Scrape the dough onto a lightly floured baking sheet and pat it flat to a 1-inch thickness. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze for at least 1 hour and up to 4 weeks.

Position racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment.

Cut the chilled dough into quarters. On a well-floured work surface, roll out one piece of dough to 1/8 inch thick (keep the remaining dough in the freezer). If the dough sticks to your work surface, slide an offset spatula under the dough to release it and dust the work surface with more flour.

With a 4 1/4-inch cookie cutter, cut out the cookies and use an offset spatula to transfer them to the baking sheets, spacing them at least 1/2 inch apart. Brush off any excess flour.

Gather and press the dough scraps together, then roll to 1/8 inch thick, and cut out more shapes. Add any remaining scraps to the next quarter of chilled dough. Continue rolling and cutting until the baking sheets are full.

Bake the cookies, rotating and swapping the sheets' positions halfway through baking, until firm to the touch and the edges are slightly golden, about 10 minutes. Slide the cookies on their parchment onto racks and let cool. Roll out and bake the remaining dough in batches on fresh sheets of parchment.

MAKE THE ROYAL ICING

In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment (or in a medium bowl with a hand mixer) mix the confectioners' sugar, powdered egg whites, and cream of tartar on low speed. Increase the speed to medium low and add 3 to 5 Tbs. of water, 1 Tbs. at a time, mixing well and scraping the bowl as necessary, until the mixture is evenly moistened and the whisk leaves small trails that disappear quickly, 2 to 3 minutes. Continue to beat on medium low until the icing is thick, glossy, smooth, and free of lumps, about 5 minutes more.

To test for proper consistency, put a dot of icing on the counter with a toothpick. If, when you pull up the toothpick, the icing forms a peak that slowly melts back into the dot, the icing is ready. If the peak stays up, it's too stiff. Add 1 tsp. of water to the icing, beat to combine, and test again. Repeat if necessary.

DECORATE THE COOKIES

Scrape the icing into a pastry bag fitted with a small tip. (You can also use a plastic squeeze bottle or a plastic sandwich bag with a corner trimmed off.) Decorate the cookies as you like and let sit until the icing is completely set, about 40 minutes.

Carolyn Weil is a pastry chef, cooking instructor, and former bakery owner.



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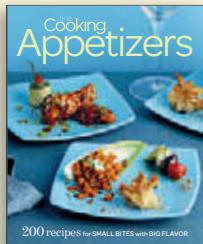
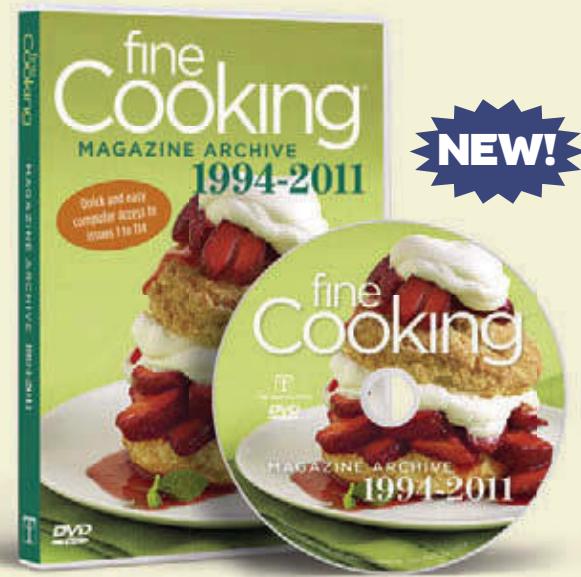
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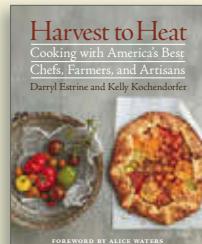
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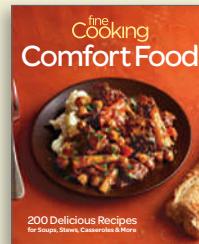
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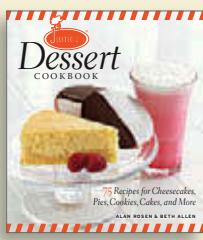
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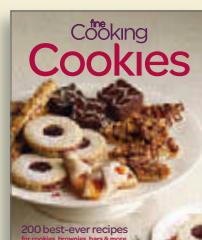
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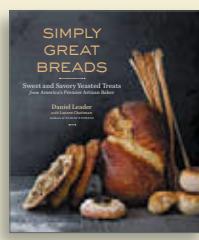
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FOOD SCIENCE



THE SCIENCE OF

Emulsion Sauces

Learn the chemistry behind these notoriously tricky sauces, plus the secrets to getting them right.

BY DAVID JOACHIM AND ANDREW SCHLOSS

WHAT DO MAYONNAISE, HOLLANDAISE, and vinaigrette have in common? They're all emulsion sauces, which means they get their luscious mouthfeel from fat suspended in water. But we all know that fat and water don't mix, so emulsified sauces are always on the verge of "breaking" or separating. Knowing the science behind that separation can help you prevent it.

What exactly is an emulsion sauce?

Emulsion sauces are made by mixing two substances that don't normally mix. To do this, you have to break one of them into millions of minuscule droplets and suspend those droplets in the other substance by vigorously whisking, or better yet, blending them in a blender or food

processor (see the recipe opposite).

When two substances don't naturally mix, it's because the molecules of each are more attracted to themselves than to the others, so even the most thoroughly combined emulsion sauce will not stay combined for long. To prevent separation, a substance called an "emulsifier" is often mixed in. Emulsifiers, such as egg yolks and mustard, are made up of big, bulky protein molecules. When combined with fat, like oil or butter, and watery ingredients, like vinegar, lemon juice, and of course, water, these molecules get in the way, making it harder for like molecules to find and bind to each other. Therefore, there's a better chance that the emulsion will hold.

Some of the most common emulsion sauces are vinaigrette (oil suspended in vinegar, sometimes emulsified with mustard), mayonnaise (oil suspended in lemon juice and water, emulsified with egg yolk), hollandaise (melted butter suspended in lemon juice and water, emulsified with egg yolk), and beurre blanc (butter suspended in white wine vinegar, emulsified by the milk solids in the butter).

How do you keep an emulsion sauce together?

There are three critical factors:

Add ingredients in the right order. Begin with the watery ingredients mixed with an emulsifier; then whisk in the oil or butter.



Start slowly and whisk vigorously. It's important to make the network of fat droplets as fine as possible. To that end, you need to add the oil in a slow stream or the butter a tablespoon at a time, while whisking constantly and making sure each addition is fully incorporated before adding the next. The fat droplets will become interspersed with the emulsifier, which encourages them to stay in suspension and form a thick, stable emulsion. Once the sauce gets viscous, it's safe to add the remaining oil or butter more quickly.

Control the temperature. If an emulsion sauce that contains egg, like hollandaise, gets too hot, the egg proteins will coagulate and turn the sauce lumpy and thin. In an eggless emulsion, like a beurre blanc, too much heat will make the butterfat separate from the butter and leak out.

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, an emulsion sauce might still break on you. If this happens, you may be able to rescue it. See the chart above for some quick fixes.

Troubleshooting Emulsion Sauces When an emulsion breaks, how you fix it depends on the sauce.			
	PROBLEM	CAUSE	FIX
MAYONNAISE	The mayonnaise fails to thicken.	The oil has been added too quickly, so it never gets dispersed.	Beat a fresh egg yolk with a tablespoon of water and/or lemon juice in a clean bowl, and slowly whisk in the broken sauce.
	The mayonnaise becomes oily on the surface.	Water has evaporated from the mixture, giving the oil droplets a chance to coalesce.	Whisk in a spoonful of water.
HOLLANDAISE	The sauce is lumpy and thin.	The egg yolk has overcooked.	Strain out the lumps and whisk the hot broken sauce into another gently heated egg yolk in a clean bowl.
	The sauce has separated while being kept warm.	The sauce has become too hot, causing the butterfat to leak.	Take it off the heat and whisk it vigorously, or briefly re-emulsify it in a blender.
VINAIGRETTE	The oil and vinegar have separated.	The simplest vinaigrettes do not contain emulsifiers like mustard, so the oil and vinegar separate unless they are being actively mixed.	Whisk the broken vinaigrette in a bowl or shake it vigorously in a closed jar and pour it over the food immediately, while it's still in motion. A separated mustard vinaigrette is fixed in the same way.
BEURRE BLANC	The sauce hasn't thickened.	The ratio of butter to liquid is too low. Either the vinegar mixture was not reduced enough before the butter was added, or not enough butter was added.	Add more butter.
	The sauce is creamy at first, but then suddenly thins.	The sauce has become too hot.	Because all of the elements to maintain an emulsion are still present, all you need to do is remove the sauce from the heat and whisk in ice chips, a few at a time, until the emulsion returns.

blender mayonnaise

Homemade mayonnaise contains raw egg yolk. If you're concerned about the safety of your yolks, buy pasteurized eggs. Yields 1½ cups

- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice**
- 1 large egg yolk**
- ½ tsp. Dijon mustard**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1¼ cups canola oil**

Combine the lemon juice, egg yolk, mustard, ¼ tsp. salt, ¼ tsp. pepper, and 2 tsp. water in a blender. With the machine running, very slowly pour in the oil in a steady stream through the hole in the blender's cap. Once the mixture thickens, you can add the remaining oil more quickly. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Use immediately or store covered in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

VARIATIONS

Herbed mayonnaise Stir 1 to 2 Tbs. finely chopped herbs into the finished mayonnaise.

Aïoli (garlic mayonnaise) Replace the mustard with 2 cloves coarsely chopped garlic.

Tartar sauce Stir ¼ cup finely chopped cornichons, 1 Tbs. minced shallots, and 1 to 2 tsp. prepared horseradish into the finished mayonnaise.

Rémoulade Stir 1 Tbs. each finely chopped capers and cornichons; 1 tsp. each finely chopped chives, chervil, and tarragon; ¼ tsp. each anchovy paste and Worcestershire sauce; and hot pepper sauce to taste into the finished mayonnaise.

David Joachim and Andrew Schloss are the authors of The Science of Good Food.



THE GOOD LIFE

Sweet Choices

Smart ways to cut down on refined sugar. BY ELLIE KRIEGER

I KNEW THAT OUR COUNTRY had a collective sweet tooth, but when I recently read that the average American consumes 72 pounds of sugar a year, I nearly fell off my chair. That's a big mound of sugar for one person, a whopping 22 teaspoons each day. To be clear, that number doesn't reflect the sugars found naturally in foods like fruit and milk; it's the sum of added sugar in all its guises, from the white stuff on your table to the corn syrup in candy to the honey you stir into your tea.

The problem with all this sugar is that the vast majority comes from very refined sources like high fructose corn syrup and white sugar. Together, they translate into about 350 nutritionally empty calories a day, which, unless burned off through activity, are stored as fat. What's more, eating refined sugar leads to big spikes in blood sugar, which stress the metabolic system and are linked to diabetes and heart disease. In fact, the latest research reveals that refined sugars may be worse than saturated fat for your heart's health.

If a voice in your head is screaming "nooooooo!" at the thought of living in a world without sweets, don't worry—that's not necessary. Instead, we can strike a much healthier balance by aiming to use fewer added sugars—more like 10 teaspoons a day, which is closer to the amount our grandparents consumed—and choosing ones that are less refined.



Added sugar doesn't have to mean empty calories. Minimally processed sweeteners like honey and maple syrup provide antioxidants and essential minerals, too.

To do this, you could take the artificial sweetener route, but I prefer to keep things natural, and in doing so, I've discovered many delicious alternatives to refined sugar.

Lean on fruit

One way to cut added sugar without sacrificing flavor is to make the most of fruit's built-in sweetness. In addition to its natural sugars, fruit provides fiber, which slows the absorption of those sugars and keeps your blood sugar from rising too rapidly. Fruit also has a wealth of essential vitamins, minerals, and health-protective antioxidants.

There are many ways to use fruit as a sweetener. Add a very ripe banana to your morning smoothie, and you'll need little to

no additional sugar. Pour a splash of fruit juice in sparkling water for a tasty soft drink substitute. Or stir mango purée into your lemonade, which lets you cut the added sugar and amp up the drink's nutritional value.

The concentrated sweetness of dried fruit like figs, dates, and raisins is ideal in homemade energy bars, granola, and pie fillings and allows you to pull back on refined sugar. The same goes for prune purée, which adds a rich sweetness to muffins, pancakes, and quick-bread batter. Also, don't forget about fruit for dessert. Sliced apples, pears, or oranges sprinkled with cinnamon are often all you need to satisfy your sweet tooth. Or try cooking your fruit: It's tough to beat wine-poached pears or baked apples for dessert, and they're delicious with very little added sweetener.

Choose less-refined sweeteners

When you do need to boost sweetness by adding sugar, reach for less-refined alternatives like honey, molasses, maple syrup, and agave instead of white sugar or brown sugar (which is essentially white sugar with a little molasses added for flavor and color). While these minimally processed sweeteners do count as added sugar and should still be used sparingly, they provide antioxidants and essential minerals and don't cause as big a spike in blood sugar as refined sweeteners do.

Each has its own distinct flavor, which adds an extra dimension to foods and beverages. Honey is a go-to sweetener for yogurt, teas, and hot toddies, as well as compotes,

Good to Know

Added sugar doesn't have to mean empty calories; each of the minimally processed sweeteners below has its own unique health benefits:



MAPLE SYRUP is rich in zinc and manganese, which are important for immune function; it also has a wealth of antioxidants.

AGAVE has an especially low glycemic index, meaning it has a more moderate effect on blood sugar than other sweeteners do.

HONEY is packed with health-protective antioxidants. The darker the honey, the more antioxidants it provides.

MOLASSES contains the highest nutritional value of all the sweeteners. It's rich in essential nutrients like potassium, magnesium, calcium, and iron.



chai-spiced fruit compote with yogurt

Chai, an Indian tea made with a blend of spices including ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, and black pepper, lends a pleasant, subtle aroma to this sweet compote.
Yields about 2 cups compote; serves 4

- 2 chai tea bags
- 3 Tbs. honey
- ½ cup dried apricots, each chopped into 8 pieces
- ½ cup pitted prunes, each chopped into 8 pieces
- ½ cup golden raisins
- 3 cups plain Greek yogurt
- ½ cup sliced or slivered natural almonds, toasted

Bring 1½ cups water to a boil in a 2-quart saucepan. Turn off the heat, add the tea bags, and steep for 5 minutes. Discard the tea bags.

Add the honey, apricots, prunes, and raisins to the saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the liquid thickens to a light syrup, 18 to 20 minutes. (It will thicken further as it cools.) Transfer to a bowl, cover, and chill for at least 4 hours and up to 3 days.

Divide the yogurt among 4 small bowls. Serve the compote over the yogurt, topped with the toasted almonds.

*Registered dietitian Ellie Krieger is a Fine Cooking contributing editor. Her latest book, *Comfort Food Fix*, is now available.*

fruit crisps, and cobblers. Maple syrup is especially appealing in granola and oatmeal. Molasses has an intense depth of flavor that works perfectly in barbecue sauces and sloppy Joes. Agave has the mildest flavor of the bunch; it dissolves easily, so it's great in cold drinks.

You can bake with all of these alternative sweeteners, too; they tend to make baked goods very soft and moist. Depending on the recipe, you might need to experiment with the amount you use. Start by substituting ¾ cup honey, maple syrup, or molasses for each cup of sugar, and reduce the liquid by 3 tablespoons. To substitute agave, use ⅔ cup agave nectar for each cup of sugar and reduce the

liquid by ¼ cup. Also, since these sweeteners will speed the browning process (the form of sugar they contain reacts more readily to heat), reduce the baking temperature by 25°F. Check for doneness at the usual time, but you may have to increase the baking time slightly.

The heavenly fruit compote at right brings together nature's sweetest assets. A medley of dried fruit is simmered with honey and the warming flavors of chai until the fruit is plump and a luxurious syrup forms. Serve it with thick, tangy yogurt and a topping of toasted almonds, which lends a contrasting crunch. Lovely at the breakfast table or as an afternoon snack, this fruit compote is a smart way to satisfy your sweet tooth.

'Twas the night before dinner...

And all through the house, not a cook was stirring, because the big holiday meal was made entirely ahead. **BY MOLLY STEVENS**

A FEW YEARS AGO, in the midst of preparing an elaborate Christmas Eve dinner, I realized I'd forgotten the bacon for the clams casino. I raced to the market, but of course, traffic was miserable, and the store was mobbed. By the time I got home, I barely had time to finish dinner, much less dress before my company arrived. As I lay in bed that night, it wasn't visions of sugarplums that danced in my head. It was a plan to do things differently next year.

These days, I sit down weeks ahead of time and calmly dream up a befittingly elegant menu, taking care to choose recipes that require very little last-minute fussing. In fact, I look for dishes that actually improve after a day or two in the refrigerator, like the ones in this menu: delicate potted shrimp (a classic British spread), spice-rubbed beef tenderloin, creamy potato and rutabaga gratin, satiny braised fennel, and a luxurious gingerbread trifle.

Get organized

Mapping out a schedule for getting everything done—including shopping—is the key to never being a harried host. For this menu, I start by dividing the grocery shopping into two trips. A week ahead, I buy all the pantry items and less-perishable fresh foods, and then I just need to pick up the shrimp and beef two days before the party

(if you pre-order these, you can farm this errand out to a willing family member).

The actual cooking begins three days before the party. That's when I make the ginger syrup for the trifle. The next day, I turn my attention to the shrimp, the gratin, and the fennel, and make the gingerbread cake. The day before the party, I prep the salad for the shrimp, season the beef, make the wine sauce, and finish the trifle. By breaking up the work, the menu feels entirely manageable, and my kitchen never looks as though it's eligible for federal disaster relief.

On the day of the party, most of the work is already done. A couple of hours before my guests arrive, I remove the beef and side dishes from the refrigerator—they heat more evenly from room temperature than from refrigerator-cold—and turn on the oven. As guests appear, I reheat the gratin and put the tenderloin in to roast (it takes just under an hour), which leaves a nice window for cocktails and pre-dinner mingling. The other side dishes take just a few minutes to get ready for the table, and as soon as the beef is done, I serve the shrimp; this allows the roast time to rest so that it carves up juicy and rosy. Since the gingerbread trifle is at its best at least a day after you make it, it's entirely ready to go. And as the host, so are you.



Holiday Menu for 8 to 10

Potted Shrimp on Toast with Celery-Radish Salad

2010 Coopers Creek
Sauvignon Blanc,
Marlborough, New Zealand (\$14)

Spice-Rubbed Roast Beef Tenderloin with Red Wine Sauce

Mashed Potato and Rutabaga Gratin

Braised Fennel with Orange

2008 Bianchi Zen Ranch Zinfandel,
Paso Robles, California (\$28)

Gingerbread-Brandy Trifle

Brooklyn Brewery's Black
Chocolate Stout (\$13/six-pack)
Coffee and tea

potted shrimp on toast with celery-radish salad

If you've never tried potted shrimp, a classic British hors d'oeuvre, think of it as a chunky, buttery shrimp spread seasoned with freshly grated nutmeg and a touch of cayenne. Here, it's paired with a bright, crunchy salad for an elegant appetizer.

Serves 8 to 10

FOR THE SHRIMP

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dry white wine
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup coarsely chopped carrot (about 1 medium)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup coarsely chopped celery (about 1 medium stalk)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Champagne vinegar or rice vinegar
- 5 whole black peppercorns
- 4 to 6 allspice berries

- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-wide strips of lemon zest
- 3 dried bay leaves
- Kosher salt
- 10 oz. large (31 to 40 per lb.) shell-on shrimp (about 18)
- 6 oz. ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) best-quality salted butter, such as Kerrygold
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. cayenne

FOR THE SALAD

- 3 cups thinly sliced celery (about 3 medium stalks)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups thinly sliced radishes (about 5)
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice; more as needed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Dijon mustard
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 12 to 15 cocktail-size (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-square) slices pumpernickel, rye, or black bread, or 6 to 8 sandwich-size slices

MAKE THE SHRIMP

In a 2- to 3-quart saucepan, combine 2 cups of water with the wine, carrot, celery, vinegar, peppercorns, allspice, lemon zest, 2 of the bay leaves, and 1 tsp. salt. Bring to a simmer

Food styling by Paul Grimes



over medium-high heat, cover, reduce the heat, and simmer for about 15 minutes. Add the shrimp, return to a simmer, cover, remove from the heat, and let stand for 5 minutes. Drain in a colander and let cool.

Peel and devein the shrimp (discard the other solids). In a food processor, pulse the shrimp until coarsely chopped—the pieces should be pea-size. Set aside.

Melt the butter in an 8-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the lemon juice, Worcestershire, nutmeg, and cayenne and stir to combine. Remove the skillet from the heat, add the shrimp, and stir to coat. Scrape into a 10-oz. ramekin, terrine, or bowl, and smooth

the surface with a spatula. Garnish with the remaining bay leaf. Cover tightly with plastic. [The potted shrimp can be refrigerated for 1 to 2 days.]

MAKE THE SALAD

Toss the celery and radishes in a large serving bowl.

Put the olive oil, lemon juice, mustard,

¼ tsp. salt, and several grinds of black pepper in a small jar. Cover and shake to combine. Season to taste with more salt, pepper, and lemon juice. [The salad and dressing may be prepared to this point up to 1 day ahead; cover tightly and refrigerate.]

SERVE

Remove the potted shrimp from the refrigerator about 2 hours before serving. Toss the salad with the dressing and parsley, and then season to taste with salt and pepper.

[The salad may be dressed up to 30 minutes before serving.]

Lightly toast the bread. If using cocktail-size bread, halve each on the diagonal; if using sandwich-size bread, quarter on the diagonal. Mound a heaping tablespoon of the potted shrimp on each piece of toast. Serve with the salad.

WILD SHRIMP TASTE BETTER

I like using wild-caught domestic shrimp for this recipe because they have a sweeter flavor and more delicate texture than farm-raised imports.



The Dinner Plan

1 WEEK AHEAD

- Shop for everything but the beef tenderloin and shrimp
- Order the shrimp and beef tenderloin

3 DAYS AHEAD

- Make the ginger-tea syrup for the trifle

2 DAYS AHEAD

- Pick up the shrimp and beef tenderloin
- Make the potted shrimp
- Make the potato gratin
- Braise the fennel
- Make the gingerbread cake for the trifle

1 DAY AHEAD

- Season the beef tenderloin
- Chop the celery and radish for the salad and make the vinaigrette
- Make the red wine reduction sauce
- Make the filling for the trifle and assemble the trifle

THE MORNING OF

- Set the table

2 HOURS AHEAD

- Remove the potted shrimp, beef, gratin, and fennel from the refrigerator and let come to room temperature

1 HOUR AHEAD

- Roast the beef
- Heat the gratin

20 TO 30 MINUTES BEFORE THE BEEF IS DONE

- Heat the red wine sauce
- Toast the bread for the potted shrimp
- Heat the fennel
- Dress the salad

WHILE THE BEEF RESTS

- Serve the potted shrimp and salad



A TRIPLE REDUCTION GIVES INTENSE FLAVOR

The secret to this wine sauce is adding the wine and broth in three stages and letting them reduce before adding more. Each reduction leaves caramelized wine or broth on the sides of the pan, and when you add more liquid, it dissolves all of that flavor into the sauce, giving it depth and body.

spice-rubbed roast beef tenderloin with red wine sauce

For a crowd, I prefer to buy two partial tenderloins instead of one whole one. At the meat counter, request two butt tenderloins from the thicker hip portion of the tenderloin. This way, there are no thinner tail ends, and the roasts cook evenly. The sauce requires a whole bottle of red wine, but don't reach for the cheapest bottle—you want something that tastes good in the glass, too, since the long reduction will concentrate its flavor. **Serves 8 to 10, with leftovers**

FOR THE BEEF

- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh thyme
- 1 Tbs. ground fennel seed
- ½ tsp. caraway seeds, coarsely ground
- Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper
- 2 2½-lb. beef butt tenderloins, trimmed

FOR THE SAUCE

- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 1 Tbs. pure olive oil or expeller-pressed canola oil

- 4 oz. cremini mushrooms, thinly sliced (1¼ cup)
- ¼ cup thinly sliced shallot (1 medium)
- ¼ tsp. granulated sugar
- Kosher salt
- 3 large sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 tsp. cracked black peppercorns
- 1 750-ml bottle dry, hearty red wine, such as Shiraz or Zinfandel
- 2 cups lower-salt beef broth
- 1 Tbs. all-purpose flour
- Freshly ground black pepper

SEASON THE BEEF

In a small bowl, combine the olive oil, thyme, fennel, caraway, 1 Tbs. salt, and 1½ tsp. pepper. Pat the tenderloins dry with paper towels and coat them with the spice mixture, using your hands to spread it evenly; it will sparsely cover the meat. [The beef can be prepared to this point **24 to 36 hours ahead**. Put it on a rimmed baking sheet or platter, loosely cover with plastic, and refrigerate.]

MAKE THE SAUCE

Melt 1 Tbs. of the butter and the oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the mushrooms, shallot, sugar, and ¼ tsp. salt. Cook, stirring often, until soft and beginning to brown, about 6 minutes. Add the thyme, peppercorns, and half of the wine. Simmer briskly until the wine reduces and just covers the solids, 10 to 15 minutes. Add the remaining wine and reduce again until the wine just



covers the solids, 10 to 12 minutes more. Add the beef broth and simmer until reduced by half, about 15 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve set over a 1-quart measuring cup, pressing lightly on the solids. If you have more than 1½ cups liquid, return the sauce to the pan and simmer until reduced to 1½ cups.

Melt the remaining 1 Tbs. butter in a 1-quart saucepan over low heat. Whisk in the flour and cook, whisking often, until smooth and light beige in color, about 1 minute. Slowly add the wine reduction, whisking constantly. Bring to a simmer and cook, whisking often, until slightly thickened, about 3 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. [The sauce may be made **1 to 2 days ahead**. Cool to room temperature, transfer to an airtight container, and refrigerate.]

ROAST THE BEEF

Remove the beef from the refrigerator and let sit at room temperature for about an hour be-

fore roasting. Meanwhile, position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F. **Arrange the roasts** on a flat rack on a large rimmed baking sheet. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center reads 120°F for rare, 125°F to 130°F for medium rare, or 135°F for medium, 40 to 50 minutes.

Dinner Becomes Brunch

Leftover roast beef tenderloin is my secret weapon for an easy, tasty brunch the next day. The meal can be as simple as roast beef sandwiches on soft rolls with horseradish mayonnaise and a few sprigs of watercress. Or for something more substantial, platter the sliced tenderloin and make it the centerpiece of a lavish buffet. Some of my favorite dishes to round out the meal are a crab and avocado salad, a citrusy salad of fresh grapefruit and arugula with a honey-lime vinaigrette, and biscuits or a coffee cake. Go to FineCooking.com/extras for recipes.

SERVE

If the sauce was made ahead, heat gently in a small saucepan over medium-low heat, whisking a few times, until barely simmering. **Meanwhile, let the beef rest** for 15 minutes before carving crosswise into thick slices. Slice only as much as you plan to serve right away (leftovers keep better unsliced). Spoon the sauce over each serving or pass at the table.



mashed potato and rutabaga gratin

Rutabaga brings a delicious earthy note to these baked mashed potatoes, and cream cheese adds richness. This gratin is surprisingly light and fluffy, even when made ahead and reheated. Bake it in a dish that you're happy to take to the table. **Serves 8 to 10**

- 2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened; more for the baking dish**
- 5 medium Yukon Gold potatoes (1½ lb.), peeled and cut into 1- to 1½-inch chunks**
- 1 large rutabaga (about 1½ lb.), peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks**
- Kosher salt**
- 8 oz. cream cheese, cut into 4 chunks, softened**
- ½ tsp. dry mustard**
- ½ cup (2 oz.) finely grated pecorino cheese**
- Whole milk, as needed**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

Butter an 8x11-inch baking dish

and set aside.

Put the potatoes and rutabaga in a 5- to 6-quart saucepan or Dutch oven and cover with cool water by about 1 inch (the rutabaga will float to the top). Add ½ tsp. salt and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium, cover partially, and cook until the potatoes are very tender and the rutabaga is soft, about 25 minutes.

Drain the vegetables and return them to the pot. Set over medium heat for a minute or two, shaking and stirring to rid them of excess moisture and steam.

Transfer the vegetables to a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or use a large mixing bowl and an electric hand mixer). On low speed, break up the vegetables until the potatoes are smooth and there are small chunks of rutabaga in the mixture. Gradually add the cream cheese, increase the speed to medium, and beat until absorbed. Gradually add the butter and beat until absorbed. Add the mustard

and half of the pecorino and beat until combined. If the purée seems too dry, add enough milk to make it light and fluffy but not wet. (You may not need to use any milk.) Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Transfer the mash to the prepared baking dish, smoothing the top with a spatula. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top. [The gratin may be prepared to this point up to **2 days ahead**. Cover and refrigerate.]

SERVE

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F. If made ahead, let the gratin sit at room temperature while the oven heats. Bake uncovered until heated through and the top is golden, about 40 minutes for a refrigerated gratin or about 20 minutes for a freshly made gratin. Let sit for 15 minutes before serving.



AN ELECTRIC MIXER MAKES A FLUFFY MASH

Use a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or a large bowl and an electric hand mixer) to mash the potatoes and rutabaga. A food processor will make them gummy, and a food mill or ricer will make their consistency too uniform.



braised fennel with orange

Orange juice and zest and citrusy coriander seeds underscore the sweetness of ultratender braised fennel. The beauty of this dish is that it's delicious hot, warm, or at room temperature. **Serves 8 to 10**

- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 medium fennel bulbs (about 4 lb. total), stalks trimmed and bulbs cut into quarters (cores left intact), fronds reserved for garnish
- 2 medium cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- ½ cup dry white wine or dry white vermouth
- ½ cup lower-salt chicken broth
- 1 medium navel orange
- ½ tsp. fennel seeds, toasted and lightly crushed
- ½ tsp. coriander seeds, toasted and lightly crushed
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F.

Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a heavy-duty 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add half the fennel, cut side down. Cook undisturbed until browned in spots, about 2 minutes. Flip and repeat on the other cut sides.

Arrange the fennel browned sides up in a large (10x14-inch) gratin or shallow baking

dish. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil to the skillet and repeat with the remaining fennel. Lower the heat to medium if any smoking occurs. It's OK if the wedges are snug in the baking dish; they'll shrink as they braise.

Add the garlic to the skillet and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the wine and scrape the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to dissolve any browned bits, about 1 minute. Add the broth and simmer to meld the flavors, about 2 minutes. Pour over the fennel.

With a vegetable peeler, remove three 3-inch strips of zest from the orange and then juice the orange. Nestle the pieces of zest in the fennel and pour the juice over. Sprinkle with the fennel seeds, coriander seeds, 1 tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper.

Cover the dish tightly with foil and braise in the oven until the fennel has collapsed and a paring knife penetrates the cores with no resistance, about 1½ hours. [The fennel may be prepared to this point up to 2 days ahead. Uncover and cool to room temperature; then cover and refrigerate.]

SERVE

If the fennel was made ahead, heat the oven to 375°F. Let the dish sit at room temperature while the oven heats. Reheat, covered, until hot, about 20 minutes. Spoon some braising liquid over the fennel, garnish with the reserved fronds, and serve. Or just bring the fennel to room temperature, garnish, and serve.



CORES KEEP THE WEDGES TOGETHER

When cutting the fennel bulbs into wedges, leave their cores intact so the layers of fennel don't fall apart during cooking. The long, slow braise renders the fennel—cores and all—very tender.

Trifle Tips



PREVENT CURDLING WITH A DOUBLE BOILER

Heating the filling ingredients over simmering water cooks them gently so the eggs don't curdle. Whisking incorporates lots of air, making the filling fluffy and light.

USE FRESH SPICES FOR BOLD FLAVOR

Make sure that the dried spices you use to make the gingerbread cake have been purchased within the past year so their flavor—and that of the cake—is fresh and potent.

BRING CAKE INGREDIENTS TO ROOM TEMPERATURE

Cake batter made with eggs, milk, and butter that aren't refrigerator-cold will aerate better and bake evenly.



gingerbread-brandy trifle

This luscious dessert marries layers of gingerbread cake, chopped crystallized ginger, and a creamy filling spiked with brandy, sparkling wine, and black tea. You can find mascarpone, an Italian-style cream cheese, in the dairy section of most supermarkets. **Serves 8 to 10**

FOR THE CAKE

- 3 oz. (6 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened; more for the pan
- 6½ oz. (1½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1½ tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. ground allspice
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- Pinch finely ground white pepper
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ½ cup unsulfured molasses
- ½ cup whole milk, at room temperature

FOR THE GINGER-TEA SYRUP

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 4-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and coarsely chopped (½ cup)
- 1 bag strong black tea, such as English breakfast
- 2 Tbs. brandy, such as Cognac

FOR THE FILLING

- ¾ cup sparkling wine, such as Asti Spumante
- 8 large egg yolks
- 6 Tbs. granulated sugar
- 1½ cups heavy cream
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 8 oz. mascarpone, at room temperature

FOR ASSEMBLY

- 6 Tbs. coarsely chopped candied ginger

MAKE THE CAKE

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9x13-inch baking pan and line the bottom with parchment.

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, ginger, baking soda, salt, allspice, cinnamon, and white pepper.

Beat the butter, sugar, and lemon zest in a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or in a large bowl with an electric hand mixer), on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Mix in the molasses. Add half of the dry ingredients and mix on low speed until just combined. Add half

of the milk and mix to combine. Repeat with the remaining dry ingredients and milk.

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, smooth the top, and bake until the center of the cake bounces back when lightly pressed and a cake tester comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for about 20 minutes; then carefully invert the cake onto the rack and let it cool completely. [The cake may be prepared to this point up to 2 days before assembly. Wrap well and store at room temperature.]

MAKE THE GINGER-TEA SYRUP

In a small saucepan, combine the sugar and ginger with ½ cup water. Bring to a simmer over medium heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Strain the syrup through a fine sieve set over a small bowl, pressing on the ginger to extract all of the syrup. Add the tea bag to the hot syrup and cool completely. Remove the tea bag and add the brandy. [The syrup may be made up to 3 days before assembly. Cover and refrigerate.]

MAKE THE FILLING

Pour 2 to 3 inches of water into a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat. In a medium stainless-steel bowl, whisk the sparkling wine, egg yolks, sugar, and 2 Tbs. of the ginger syrup.

Set the bowl over the simmering water, making sure the bottom doesn't touch the water. Whisk constantly until you can see the bottom of the bowl when you scrape the whisk across it, and the mixture is the consistency of pudding, about 8 minutes. Immediately remove from the heat and whisk frequently until cool.

Meanwhile, beat the heavy cream in a large bowl with an electric hand mixer on medium-high speed until it just starts to thicken. With the mixer still running, add the vanilla and 1 Tbs. of the ginger syrup. Continue beating until medium peaks form, about 2 minutes.

Whisk the mascarpone into the cooled egg mixture. With a spatula, gently fold the egg mixture into the whipped cream.

ASSEMBLE THE TRIFLE

Cut the cake into 1-inch cubes. Spoon a rounded cup of the filling into the bottom of a 7½-inch-diameter, 14-cup (or similar)



trifle dish. Arrange a third of the cake on top of the filling in an even layer. Drizzle $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the ginger syrup over the cake. Scatter 1 Tbs. of the candied ginger over the cake.

Repeat this layering 2 more times. Spoon the remaining filling over the final layer and smooth with the spoon. Sprinkle the remaining 3 Tbs. candied ginger over the top.

Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least a day. [The trifle can be assembled up to **2 days ahead**.]

SERVE

Remove the trifle from the refrigerator 1 to 2 hours prior to serving. Use a large spoon to scoop servings into individual dishes.

Molly Stevens is a longtime Fine Cooking contributing editor. She is the author of several cookbooks, including the award-winning All About Braising. Her latest book, All About Roasting, has just come out. □



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MADE IN ITALY DAL 1922

Lasagne from Scratch

Step by step to making fresh pasta and sauce, and turning them into three knockout lasagnes.

BY MELISSA PELLEGRINO

GROWING UP IN AN ITALIAN-AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD, as I did, meant that our Sundays revolved around cooking, culminating in a long, relaxed family supper. Homemade pasta was the star of the show, and I loved watching my mother roll out the sheets of fresh dough while a big pot of simmering red sauce perfumed the house. On the best Sundays, she would chop the meat from her sauce and layer it between the thin pasta sheets, along with creamy ricotta and mozzarella, to make her signature lasagne. She'd pull it hot and bubbling from the oven, and my brothers and I would scramble around the kitchen table, waiting for the dish to cool so we could cut into it. The first bite was always a delicious reminder of just how satisfying homemade lasagne is—sweet from the tomatoes, savory from the cheeses, and tender from the handmade pasta.

The success of the dish depends on using very thin, freshly made sheets of pasta. The thinness of the pasta lets the flavors of the sauce and cheese marry to create a lasagne that's light and truly special. It cannot be duplicated with thicker store-bought noodles.

In the pages that follow, I'll walk you through the steps to making fresh pasta just like my mother's. I'll also show you how to make a sauce from canned tomatoes that tastes amazingly fresh. Then all you have to do is layer everything together with cheese and bake it.

As much as I love classic tomato and cheese lasagne, I've had a lot of fun over the years creating new flavor combinations that show off the delicate yet firm texture of fresh lasagne noodles. The braised beef short rib with porcini lasagne and the roasted butternut squash and goat cheese lasagne on pages 58 and 59 are two delicious examples.

I won't pretend that making lasagne from scratch is easy, but if you follow my lead, the rewards will be well worth the effort.



LASAGNE: THE IDEAL MAKE-AHEAD DISH

Lasagne can be refrigerated, frozen, and reheated with no ill effects. It's also easy to make more than one lasagne at a time by simply doubling the pasta, sauce, and cheese. That way, you can freeze one for another day.

To refrigerate unbaked lasagne, tightly wrap the baking dish in plastic. It will keep for up to 2 days. Let the lasagne come to room temperature before baking as directed in the recipe. I don't recommend freezing unbaked lasagne because the ricotta and fresh mozzarella

release lots of liquid when they thaw, and the resulting baked lasagne would be watery.

To freeze baked lasagne (or store leftovers), tightly wrap a whole lasagne (in its baking dish) or individual portions in plastic and then foil, and freeze for up to 3 months. Don't thaw baked lasagne before reheating or the noodles may become mushy. Reheat from frozen, covered in foil, in a 350°F oven until hot throughout, about 2 hours. (Be sure to remove the plastic before reheating.)

fresh pasta for lasagne

It's important to use room-temperature eggs when making fresh pasta because they'll be more readily absorbed by the flour. Don't layer the pasta on kitchen towels if you use a scented fabric softener because the pasta will pick up the scent—use parchment instead. To store the pasta for up to 24 hours before assembling a lasagne, layer the cooled, cooked noodles on a baking sheet, wrap tightly with plastic, and refrigerate. **Yields about 1 lb. pasta; enough for one 9x13-inch lasagne**

11½ oz. (2½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more as needed

4 large eggs, at room temperature
Kosher salt

MAKE THE DOUGH

Mound the flour on a clean work surface. With your hands, make a high-walled, 7- to 8-inch-diameter well in the center of the flour. Crack the eggs into the well. With a fork, lightly beat the eggs, gradually pulling flour from the inner rim of the well into the egg, until a soft, clumpy dough begins to form **1**. When the dough becomes difficult to work with the fork, use your hands to pull in the remaining flour from the well, kneading gently until the dough is cohesive. Move the dough off to the side and, with a dough scraper, scrape up and discard any bits of dough stuck to the work surface. Clean your hands. Lightly dust the surface and your hands with flour and knead the dough, adding more flour as needed, until it becomes

smooth, elastic, and just a bit tacky, about 5 minutes **2**. Cover the dough with a clean towel and let rest at room temperature for 20 minutes.

ROLL THE DOUGH

Lay a clean tablecloth or several kitchen towels on a counter. Cut the dough into 6 pieces and cover with a towel. With your hands, flatten and shape one piece of dough into a ½-inch-thick rectangle. Dust it lightly with flour and pass it through the widest setting on the pasta machine. If the dough comes out oddly shaped, reform into a rectangle. Fold it in thirds, like a letter, and if necessary, flatten to ½ inch thick. Pass it through the widest setting again with the seam of the letter perpendicular to the rollers **3**. Repeat this folding and rolling step 10 to 12 times, dusting the dough with flour if it becomes sticky.

Without folding the dough, pass it through the next setting on the pasta machine. Keep reducing the space

between the rollers after each pass, lightly dusting the pasta with flour on both sides each time, until the pasta is about $\frac{1}{16}$ inch thick and 3 inches wide **4**.

Lay the rolled-out dough on the tablecloth. Roll out the remaining dough in the same manner. Cut each strip of dough into 11-inch lengths.

COOK THE PASTA

Bring a 10-quart pot of well-salted (at least 1 Tbs. salt) water to a boil over high heat. Put a large bowl of ice water near the pot of boiling water. Line a rimmed baking sheet with two clean kitchen towels or sheets of parchment and have more towels or parchment ready.

Put 3 or 4 noodles in the boiling water

5. Once the water returns to a boil, cook for about 30 seconds. With a large wire skimmer, carefully transfer them to the ice water to stop the cooking. Repeat with the remaining noodles.

Drain the noodles and rinse under cold water **6**. Very gently squeeze each noodle to remove excess water and then spread it flat on the towel-lined baking sheet. Layer the noodles between clean towels (or parchment) and set aside until you're ready to assemble the lasagne.

Make a silky pasta dough



1

Cracks may open in the well as you're mixing the flour into the eggs. If that happens, push flour into the cracks to close them. Continue mixing in flour, a bit at a time, until the soft, wet dough holds together enough that you can work it with your hands.



2

Knead until the pasta dough is smooth, elastic, and barely tacky. You can dust the dough with more flour if it's too sticky, but try not to add too much additional flour or the pasta will be tough.

Roll the dough until thin and supple



3

Repeatedly folding the dough into thirds, like a letter, and passing it through the widest setting of the machine helps form gluten in the pasta, which gives it its firm texture.



4

Passing the dough through consecutively narrower settings on the pasta machine stretches and thins it to the proper thickness, which is about $\frac{1}{16}$ inch thick.

Cook the pasta until just al dente



5

Boil the noodles in batches so they cook evenly and don't stick together. Let the water return to a boil after each batch and cook until just barely al dente; the noodles will cook more as they bake.



6

Rinsing the cooked noodles under cold running water removes excess starch. This step keeps them from sticking to the kitchen towels, which could lead to tearing when they're later removed from the towels.

Make the sauce



7

Browning garlic in olive oil infuses the oil with its punchy flavor, but it's best to discard the garlic before adding the tomatoes so it doesn't overwhelm the sauce.



8

Canned whole tomatoes are less processed than crushed or puréed tomatoes. To break them down to a saucy consistency, vigorously whisk them in the pot.

four cheese and tomato lasagne

This classic combination is rich and flavorful, but thanks to thin sheets of homemade pasta, it's also light and delicate. Good luck eating just one piece. **Serves 6 to 8**

FOR THE SAUCE

- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 medium cloves garlic, smashed
- 2 28-oz. cans whole plum tomatoes, preferably San Marzano
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes; more as needed
- Kosher salt
- 6 large basil leaves, torn by hand into ½-inch pieces

FOR ASSEMBLY

- 2 cups whole-milk ricotta (1 lb.)
- 2½ cups grated fresh mozzarella (1 lb.)
- 2 cups grated fontina (8 oz.)
- 1¼ cups finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (3½ oz.)
- 1 recipe Fresh Pasta for Lasagne (p. 54)

MAKE THE SAUCE

Heat the oil and garlic in a 4- to 5-quart pot over medium heat. Cook until the garlic is

golden-brown, about 3 minutes. Discard the garlic **7**. Add the tomatoes (careful—they spatter), the crushed red pepper, and 1 Tbs. salt; simmer gently, adjusting the heat as needed, until the tomatoes begin to break down, about 45 minutes.

Whisk the tomatoes vigorously to break them up **8**. Stir in the basil and let the sauce cool to room temperature. Season to taste with salt and crushed red pepper.

ASSEMBLE THE LASAGNE

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

Set aside 1¼ cups of the sauce and mix the remaining sauce with the ricotta in a medium bowl.

Mix the mozzarella, fontina, and 1 cup of the Parmigiano in another medium bowl.

Spread ½ cup of the reserved tomato sauce on the bottom of a 9x13x3-inch baking dish. Cover the sauce with a slightly overlapping layer

Layer the noodles, sauce, and cheese, then bake



9

Layer the noodles so they overlap by about 1 inch. Cut the pasta sheets with kitchen scissors as necessary to fill in any holes.



10

Mixing the ricotta with the tomato sauce saves you the step of layering them individually. The bottom of a spoon is perfect for spreading the mixture over the noodles.

of cooked noodles, cutting them as needed to fill any gaps 9. Evenly spread 1½ cups of the ricotta mixture over the noodles 10. Sprinkle 1 rounded cup of the grated cheese evenly over the ricotta 11. Add another layer of noodles, and repeat the layers as instructed above, to make a total of 4 ricotta-and-cheese layers and 5 pasta layers. Spread the remaining ¾ cup plain sauce evenly over the top noodle layer. Sprinkle with the remaining ¾ cup of Parmigiano-Reggiano 12.

Cover the baking dish with foil and bake for 40 minutes. Remove the foil and bake until the top is browned and bubbly, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool for at least 10 minutes before serving.

FOR EXTRA FLAVOR

- Sprinkle ¼ cup crumbled cooked Italian sausage or browned ground beef and chopped onions over each layer of the ricotta mixture.
- Scatter ½ cup squeezed-dry, thawed frozen chopped spinach over each layer of the ricotta mixture.



11

Sprinkle the cheese mixture right to the edges of the dish so the lasagne isn't thicker in the center than at the edges. The grated cheese will melt evenly and meld with the other ingredients.



12

Spread the remaining tomato sauce over the top layer of noodles and sprinkle with Parmigiano. The baked, uncut lasagne won't appear as cheesy as you may be used to, but there's plenty of cheese inside.

SOME SHORTCUTS ARE OK

I can't stress enough how delicious lasagne is when made entirely from scratch. But I also know that sometimes shortcuts are necessary. Here are a few that you can take without sacrificing too much flavor and texture.

THE PASTA Instead of making your own, buy fresh pasta sheets from a gourmet grocery store or Italian market. Or substitute 1lb. dried lasagne noodles from the supermarket and cook according to package directions; thicker store-bought noodles will make the lasagne heavier, so use only four layers of pasta during assembly (instead of the five called for in the recipe). Please don't use "no-boil" noodles; their dense texture will overwhelm the other ingredients.

THE SAUCE You can use canned crushed tomatoes instead of whole tomatoes—they'll save you the step of breaking the tomatoes down in the sauce. But avoid jarred sauces. Most have too much sugar, salt, and preservatives, which means you have no control over the seasoning.

THE CHEESE Grated cheeses melt quickly and evenly; a food processor with a shredding disk will shred the fresh mozzarella and fontina in seconds. Pre-shredded mozzarella and pre-grated Parmigiano-Reggiano don't work here because they're too dry and will affect the texture of the finished dish.

short rib and dried porcini lasagne

This company-worthy lasagne features beef short ribs that are slow-cooked in a hearty tomato sauce until meltingly tender. Béchamel sauce adds creaminess, and porcini mushrooms contribute an earthy note. You can braise, shred, and refrigerate the short ribs up to 2 days ahead. Keep the sauce and meat separate in airtight containers. Skim off any fat that has congealed on the surface of the sauce.

Serves 6 to 8

¾ oz. (1 cup) dried porcini mushrooms
2 lb. beef short ribs
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2½ Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
1 small carrot, finely chopped
1 small celery stalk, finely chopped
1 Tbs. tomato paste
1 bay leaf, preferably fresh
½ cup dry red wine
1½ cups canned crushed tomatoes
3 Tbs. unsalted butter
3 Tbs. all-purpose flour
2 cups whole milk

¾ cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (about 1½ oz.); more for serving
1 recipe Fresh Pasta for Lasagne (p. 54)

SOAK THE MUSHROOMS

In a small bowl, soak the porcini in 1½ cups warm water until softened, about 10 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the soaking liquid. Coarsely chop the mushrooms and set aside in a bowl.

BRAISE THE RIBS

Season the short ribs all over with 1 tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. In a 7- to 8-quart Dutch oven, heat 1½ Tbs. of the oil over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add the short ribs, in batches if necessary, and brown all over, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate. Pour off and discard all but a thin layer of fat. **Reduce the heat to medium** and add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil to the pan. Add the onion,

carrot, celery, and a pinch of salt and cook until the vegetables are tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the tomato paste and bay leaf and cook, stirring, until the tomato paste darkens, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the red wine and simmer, stirring and scraping up any browned bits with a wooden spoon, until almost evaporated, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the reserved mushroom liquid and the tomatoes and bring to a simmer. Add the short ribs and any accumulated juices and the porcini; cover, reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer, and cook, turning the ribs every 40 minutes, until the meat is fall-off-the-bone tender, 2½ to 3 hours.

Put the ribs on a plate to cool. Pour the sauce into a heatproof bowl and discard the bay leaf. When the fat rises to the surface, skim it off and discard. Season to taste with salt and pepper. When the meat is cool enough to handle, remove and discard the bones and any fat or cartilage from the meat. Shred the meat and set aside in a medium bowl.

MAKE A BÉCHAMEL SAUCE

Melt the butter in a 3-quart saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the flour with a wooden spoon and cook until golden, about 2 minutes. Gradually whisk in the milk and cook at a gentle simmer, stirring often, until the mixture thickens, about 10 minutes. Season with 1 tsp. salt. Mix the béchamel sauce into the short rib sauce.

ASSEMBLE AND BAKE THE LASAGNE

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

Spread ¾ cup of the sauce on the bottom of a 9x13x3-inch baking dish. Cover the sauce with a slightly overlapping layer of cooked noodles, cutting them as needed to fill any gaps. Spread ¼ cup of the sauce evenly over the noodles. Add ½ cup of the shredded meat in an even layer and then sprinkle with 2 Tbs. of the Parmigiano. Add another layer of noodles and repeat the layers as instructed above, to make a total of 4 layers of sauce and meat and 5 layers of pasta—at this point, you should have used all the meat but still have about ¾ cup of sauce and ¼ cup of Parmigiano left. Spread the remaining sauce evenly over the top and then sprinkle with the remaining Parmigiano.

Cover the baking dish with foil and bake for 40 minutes. Remove the foil and bake until the top is browned and bubbly, 15 to 20 minutes. Cool for at least 10 minutes before serving. Serve sprinkled with additional Parmigiano, if you like.





butternut squash lasagne with goat cheese, sage, and breadcrumbs

The combination of sweet-and-savory roasted squash, tangy goat cheese, and fresh herbs brings big flavor to this lasagne, while the tender pasta keeps things light. You can make the roasted squash mixture up to 1 day ahead. **Serves 6 to 8**

- 1 large butternut squash (about 3 lb.), halved lengthwise and seeded
- 2 medium cloves garlic, unpeeled
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme plus 2 tsp. chopped leaves
- 2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 5 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 2 sprigs fresh sage plus 1 tsp. chopped leaves
- 1½ oz. (¼ cup) all-purpose flour
- 3 cups whole milk
- 1¼ cups crumbled fresh goat cheese (4 oz.)
- 1 cup finely grated Pecorino Romano (2 oz.)
- ¼ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- ¼ cup coarse dry breadcrumbs or panko
- 1 recipe Fresh Pasta for Lasagne (p. 54)

ROAST THE SQUASH AND GARLIC

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F.

Put the squash cut side up on a large, heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet. Put 1 garlic clove and 1 sprig of thyme in each cavity. Drizzle each half with 1 tsp. of the oil and then season each with ¼ tsp. salt and a few grinds of pepper. Roast until the squash is browned in

spots and very tender when pierced with a skewer, 45 to 50 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool completely.

Discard the thyme sprigs. Peel the garlic and put in a large bowl. Scoop the squash flesh from the skins and add it to the garlic. Mash with a fork until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.

MAKE A GOAT CHEESE AND SAGE SAUCE

Melt 4 Tbs. of the butter in a 3-quart saucepan over medium heat. Add the sage sprigs and cook until the butter is fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Discard the sage. Add the flour and whisk until smooth and golden, about 2 minutes. Gradually whisk in the milk and cook, whisking occasionally, until thickened enough to coat the back of a spoon, about 15 minutes. Stir in the goat cheese, ½ cup of the pecorino, the nutmeg, 1 tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Season to taste with more salt and pepper. Set aside 1½ cups of the sauce and mix the rest with the mashed squash.

SEASON THE BREADCRUMBS

Melt the remaining 1 Tbs. butter in a small skillet over medium heat. In a small bowl, mix the breadcrumbs, chopped sage, chopped

thyme, a pinch of salt, and few grinds of pepper. Add the melted butter and mix well.

ASSEMBLE AND BAKE THE LASAGNE

Spread ½ cup of the reserved cheese sauce over the bottom of a 9x13x3-inch baking dish. Cover the sauce with a slightly overlapping layer of cooked noodles, cutting them as needed to fill any gaps. Spread 1 cup of the squash mixture evenly over the noodles. Add another layer of noodles and repeat the layers as instructed above, to make a total of 4 squash layers and 5 pasta layers. Spread the remaining 1 cup cheese sauce evenly over the top. Sprinkle with the breadcrumb mixture and the remaining ½ cup pecorino. **Cover the baking dish with foil** and bake for 40 minutes. Remove the foil and bake until the top is browned and bubbly, 15 to 20 minutes. Cool for at least 10 minutes before serving.

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Watch Melissa make more homemade pasta recipes at FineCooking.com/extras.

winter green

Chicories like escarole, frisée, endive, and radicchio make the freshest salads of the season. **BY TASHA DE SERIO**

WHEN IT'S COLD OUTSIDE, SALAD MIGHT NOT BE THE FIRST THING ON YOUR MIND—but maybe it should be. Winter greens are in season, and they add a welcome touch of brightness to any meal. Right now, my California garden is brimming with full heads of escarole, frilly frisée, ruby-red radicchio, and an experimental crop of Belgian endive, but even if you live in a snowy climate, these greens (which all belong to the chicory family) are widely available. They also taste much better than any bagged, pre-cut lettuce you'll find at the supermarket.

Chicories have an assertive, pleasant bitterness, so the key to using them in salads is to balance that flavor. This means pairing them with ingredients that are either very mild (like cauliflower), rich (like avocado or cheese), or bold (like bright citrus, tart apples, salty anchovies, or a punchy vinaigrette). Try to keep it simple; limit the number of additional elements in your salad to three or four, and you can't go wrong.

For some delicious examples, look to the recipes here, each of which makes a refreshing starter or side dish. Or make one into a meal—just follow my suggestions for adding chicken, shrimp, steak, or lamb. Soon, when it's time for dinner, salad may be the first thing on your mind.

dress for success

For the most delicious salads, keep the following tips in mind:

Salad greens should be clean and dry—there's no saving a gritty, watery salad, and dressing coats dry greens better. To wash greens, swish them in a large basin filled with cold water. Spin the greens dry in small batches or layer them between clean kitchen towels. Store in a plastic bag, a covered container, or the salad spinner, along with a damp towel.

Season all components of a salad, including the dressing, separately before combining. You should even season the greens with salt and a few grinds of black pepper. (If the greens are especially peppery, I sometimes go without pepper.)

Before dressing a salad, always taste your vinaigrette with a lettuce leaf or a vegetable. Adjust the seasoning with salt or acid (vinegar or citrus juice) as necessary. If a salad is too acidic or too dry, add a little more oil. If it tastes flat, try a few drops of acid or salt.

When dressing salad greens, drizzle a conservative amount of vinaigrette in a circular motion around the edge of the bowl and finish with a little on the greens—this makes it easier to coat the greens evenly when you toss them.



RADICCHIO

Reddish-purple radicchio has a strong but pleasant bitter flavor. The leaves, which start thin and get thicker and crispier toward the core, are lovely in salads when thinly sliced or torn into large rustic pieces. Look for radicchio with fresh, bright, unblemished outer leaves.

FRISÉE

Bittersweet frisée, or blanched curly endive, has frizzy leaves that add light, crisp texture to salads. Use only the tender, pale hearts. Look for frisée with leafy green outer leaves and yellow-green to white interior leaves.

ESCAROLE

Crisp, leafy escarole has a sweet, mildly bitter flavor. For salads, use only the tender, pale hearts, and save the outer leaves for sautés or soups. Look for escarole with yellow-green to white hearts. Avoid wilted or browning outer leaves and green hearts.

BELGIAN ENDIVE

Slightly bitter Belgian endives add crunchy texture to salads. They tend to brown quickly, so cut endives just before using. Choose those with tight, white heads and pale-yellow tips. Wrap well and refrigerate to protect from light, which turns them pale green and excessively bitter.



radicchio and cauliflower salad with toasted breadcrumbs

Here, the mildness of cauliflower balances radicchio's assertive, bitter flavor. For a tasty variation, try adding black olives or finely chopped hard-cooked egg. If you're concerned about the raw yolk in the dressing, buy pasteurized eggs. **Serves 4**

- 1 medium head radicchio (about 1/2 lb.)
- 1½ cups coarse, fresh breadcrumbs (from a country-style French or Italian loaf)
- ½ cup plus 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt
- 1 small cauliflower (about 1¼ lb.), cored and cut into 1-inch florets
- 1 medium clove garlic
- 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar; more as needed
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 large egg yolk
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

TO PREP THE RADICCHIO, remove any damaged outer leaves. Quarter the radicchio, remove the core, and cut each quarter crosswise into 1-inch widths.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

Put the breadcrumbs on a rimmed baking sheet and toss lightly with 2 Tbs. of olive oil to coat evenly. Spread in a thin, even layer and season lightly with salt. Bake, stirring every few minutes, until crisp and light golden-brown, about 10 minutes. Set aside to cool on the pan.

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Cook the cauliflower in the boiling water until just tender, about 3 minutes. Drain, spread on a baking sheet, and set aside at room temperature.

Put the garlic in a mortar, add a pinch of salt, and pound to a paste with a pestle. Or mince and then mash to a paste with the side of a chef's knife. Combine the garlic, vinegar, lemon juice, and mustard in a small bowl. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes. Whisk in the egg yolk, and then slowly whisk in the remaining olive oil until emulsified. Taste with a piece of cauliflower and season with more vinegar or salt if necessary.

Put the cauliflower in a large bowl and season with salt and pepper. Gently toss with just enough vinaigrette to lightly coat. Add the radicchio and parsley, season with salt and pepper, and toss again with just enough vinaigrette to lightly coat. Taste and add more salt or vinaigrette if necessary. Gently transfer the salad to a platter or individual serving plates; it's best if it's arranged somewhat flat. Drizzle any remaining vinaigrette on the salad (you may not need it all), scatter the breadcrumbs on top, and serve.



MAKE IT A MEAL...

add skirt steak

Cut 1 **skirt steak** (about 1½ lb.) crosswise into 6-inch pieces and season with 1½ tsp. chopped fresh **thyme** and 1½ tsp. **kosher salt**. Heat a large cast-iron skillet over high heat until very hot. Add 2 Tbs. **olive oil**; then add the steak in a single layer (if necessary, cook in batches). Cook, flipping once, until browned on both sides and medium rare, 3 to 5 minutes. (Reduce the heat to medium high to finish cooking thicker sections of the meat.) Season with coarsely ground **black pepper** and let rest 5 minutes. Thinly slice the meat against the grain and serve with the salad.



endive and watercress salad with apples and herbs

In this refreshing salad, cool, crisp endive and apple pair well with peppery watercress and a tangy lemon-shallot dressing. Fresh chervil, parsley, tarragon, and chives—a classic French herb mixture known as fines herbes—add extra brightness. **Serves 4**

- 4 medium heads Belgian endive (about 1 lb. total)
- 1 medium shallot, finely diced ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup)
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice; more as needed
- 1 Tbs. white wine vinegar; more as needed
- Kosher salt
- 6 Tbs. heavy cream
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bunch watercress (about 4 oz.), thick stems trimmed, cut into 3-inch sprigs (5 cups)
- 1 large, crisp apple such as Pink Lady, Sierra Beauty, or Granny Smith, thinly sliced
- 1 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh tarragon
- 1 Tbs. chives, cut at an angle into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch lengths
- 1 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh chervil (optional)
- 1 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley (optional)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup almonds, toasted and coarsely chopped

TO PREP THE BELGIAN ENDIVES, pluck off any bruised or damaged outer leaves and then cut the heads in half lengthwise through the root ends. Holding your knife at an angle, cut the endives crosswise into 1-inch-thick slices. Discard the root ends.

Combine the shallot, lemon juice, vinegar, and a pinch of salt in a small bowl. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes. Whisk in the cream and olive oil, and season with a few grinds of pepper. Taste with a piece of endive and season the vinaigrette with more lemon juice, vinegar, or salt if necessary. Set aside.

Put the endives, watercress, apple, tarragon, chives, chervil (if using), and parsley (if using) in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Gently toss the salad with just enough of the vinaigrette to lightly coat. Season to taste with more salt if necessary. Gently transfer the salad to a platter or individual serving plates. Scatter the almonds on top and serve, passing any remaining vinaigrette at the table.



MAKE IT A MEAL...

add chicken

Mix 1 Tbs. **extra-virgin olive oil** and 2 tsp. finely grated **lemon zest** in a medium bowl. Add 4 small to medium boneless, skinless **chicken breast halves** and toss to coat. Season the chicken with **kosher salt** and freshly ground **black pepper**. Heat a large skillet, preferably cast-iron, over medium-high heat. Add 2 Tbs. olive oil and swirl to coat the pan. Add the chicken and reduce the heat to medium. Cook until nicely browned and cooked through, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Slice and serve with the salad.



escarole salad with olives and garlic croutons

With its garlicky greens, crunchy croutons, and salty anchovies, this salad is reminiscent of a classic Caesar salad but without the creaminess. Long, thin shavings of Parmigiano-Reggiano would make a delicious addition. **Serves 6**

- 2 large heads escarole (1 lb. each)
- 2 medium cloves garlic, peeled
- Kosher salt
- 3 Tbs. plus $\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 oz. country-style bread, preferably day-old, crusts removed, torn into rustic bite-size pieces (about 4 cups)
- 4 anchovy fillets, rinsed
- 2 Tbs. red wine vinegar; more as needed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup black olives, such as Niçoise, rinsed well, pitted, and coarsely chopped
- Freshly ground black pepper

TO PREP THE ESCAROLE, remove the green outer leaves and discard or reserve for another use. Trim off any dark-green tips and cut off the root end. Then cut or tear the leaves into bite-size pieces (you should have about 12 cups).

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

Put the garlic in a mortar, add a pinch of salt, and pound to a paste with a pestle. Or mince and then mash to a paste with the side of a chef's knife. In a small bowl, combine half of the garlic with 3 Tbs. of the olive oil.

Put the bread on a rimmed baking sheet and toss with the garlic oil to coat evenly.

Spread the bread out, season lightly with salt, and bake until crisp and light golden-brown outside and tender inside, about 10 minutes. Set aside to cool on the baking sheet.

Pound or mince the anchovies to a paste. In a small bowl, combine the anchovy paste with the remaining garlic paste and the vinegar. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes. Whisk in the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil and stir in the olives. Taste with a leaf of escarole and season the vinaigrette with more vinegar or salt if necessary.

Put the escarole in a large bowl and season with salt and pepper. Gently toss the salad with just enough vinaigrette to lightly coat the greens. Taste and add more salt or vinaigrette if necessary. Add the croutons and toss again. Gently transfer the salad to a platter or individual serving plates, evenly distributing the croutons that may have fallen to the bottom of the bowl. Drizzle any remaining vinaigrette on the salad and serve.



MAKE IT A MEAL...

add lamb chops

Brush **lamb rib chops** (2 to 3 per person) with **olive oil** and sprinkle lightly with coarsely chopped fresh **rosemary**, **kosher salt**, and freshly ground **black pepper**. Heat a heavy-duty skillet, preferably cast iron, over high heat until very hot. Add 2 Tbs. olive oil, then the chops in a single layer (if necessary, cook in batches). Reduce the heat to medium high and cook until browned and medium rare, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Remove from the pan, let rest 3 to 5 minutes, and serve with the salad.





frisée, avocado, and grapefruit salad

It's best to layer this elegant salad, so the avocado and grapefruit don't weigh down the delicate greens. If you like, you can mix a handful of arugula or thinly sliced radicchio with the frisée. For a touch of sweet heat, sprinkle the finished salad with Aleppo pepper, a mild red chile from Turkey. **Serves 4**

- 3 to 4 medium heads frisée (about 4½ oz. each)
- 3 medium pink grapefruit
- 1 medium shallot, minced (¼ cup)
- 1½ Tbs. Champagne vinegar; more as needed
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt
- 6 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 firm-ripe avocados, pitted, peeled, and thinly sliced lengthwise
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro or flat-leaf parsley

TO PREP THE FRISÉE, remove the green outer leaves and discard or reserve for another use. Trim off any dark green tips and cut off the root ends (you should have about 5 cups).

Finely grate 1 tsp. zest from one of the grapefruit. Trim the entire peel from all of the

grapefruit and then cut the segments free from their membranes (see Test Kitchen, p. 89).

Combine the grapefruit zest, shallot, vinegar, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt in a small bowl. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes. Whisk in the olive oil. Taste with a leaf of frisée and season the vinaigrette with more vinegar or salt if necessary. Set aside.

Arrange the avocado slices on a platter or distribute among individual serving plates. Season with salt.

Put the frisée in a large bowl and season with salt and pepper. Gently toss with just enough vinaigrette to lightly coat the greens. Taste and season with more salt if necessary. Gently scatter the frisée on and around the avocado (the salad will be somewhat flat). Nestle the grapefruit slices into the salad. Drizzle more vinaigrette on the salad, focusing on the avocado; you may not need it all. Sprinkle with the cilantro and serve.



add shrimp

Peel and devein 1½ lb. extra-large **shrimp**. Cut them in half lengthwise. Warm a large sauté pan over high heat. Add 2 Tbs. **olive oil** and put the shrimp in the pan in an even layer. Season with **kosher salt** and cook, stirring occasionally, just until the shrimp turn pink and are lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and toss with 1 Tbs. fresh **lemon juice**. Add more salt or lemon juice to taste. Tuck the shrimp into the salad and drizzle with any remaining vinaigrette.

Tasha De Serio is a chef, caterer, and food writer based in Berkeley, California. Her new book, *Salad for Dinner*, will be available in March. □



Shortbread Cookies

Learn how to make and flavor these tender, buttery treats—chocolate dip optional. **BY ABIGAIL JOHNSON DODGE**

LIKE MOST FOLKS, I have a go-to list of tried-and-true cookies that I bake and give around the holidays. The usual suspects, like ginger-molasses cookies, meringues, and biscotti, make an appearance, and although I'd like to think they're all favorites, I have to say that my shortbread cookies are really the best.

I've loved shortbread cookies since I was little, when my mother would serve them with tea. Crumbly, tender, and moist, they'd practically melt in my mouth. Then, as now, I was captivated by their flavor—so buttery and full of vanilla—and intrigued by their delicate balance of sugar and salt.

Flavor and texture aside, I also like shortbread cookies because they're so easy to make, and since they taste even better a day or two after baking, they're perfect for gift giving. Best of all, they're endlessly versatile. You can vary their shape, dip them in chocolate, or add flavorings like ginger, cinnamon, espresso, lemon, or cardamom. No matter your preference, there's no better way to say "Happy Holidays."

Bread in Name Only

Shortbread dates back to medieval Scotland and was originally a sweet yeast-based biscuit. To avoid paying the taxes that were levied on biscuits at the time, Scottish bakers classified their yeasted biscuits as "bread." Eventually, the yeast was replaced by butter, and today's version of shortbread was born.

The "short" in shortbread is a reference to its texture. These cookies have a high ratio of butter to flour and a low moisture content, which inhibits the development of gluten in the dough and keeps the cookies tender and crumbly—a texture known as "short."



TAKE A DIP

Shortbread cookies are delicious on their own, but an optional chocolate dip takes them over the top. Here's how to do it: In a small, deep, heatproof bowl set in a skillet with about an inch of barely simmering water, combine 6 oz. chopped bittersweet or white chocolate and 1 tsp. canola or vegetable oil and stir until melted, about 5 minutes. Add 1 tsp. finely grated orange zest, if you like, and stir until combined. Brush any loose crumbs from the cooled shortbread and dip two-thirds of each cookie into the chocolate. Dry on a cooling rack until the chocolate firms up, about 45 minutes.

vanilla shortbread cookies

Adding a touch of cornstarch and using confectioners' sugar instead of granulated makes these cookies tender and crumbly, and a full teaspoon of salt is key to their sweet-salty flavor balance. You can make the shortbread into rectangular cookies or into wedges, a classic shortbread shape known as petticoat tails. These cookies are best served the day after baking. **Yields 40 rectangular cookies or 24 cookie wedges**

12 oz. (1½ cups) unsalted butter, softened; more for the pan(s)
15 oz. (3 ½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
2 Tbs. cornstarch
1 tsp. table salt
5 ½ oz. (1 ½ cups) confectioners' sugar
1 Tbs. pure vanilla extract or paste

For rectangular cookies, lightly butter the bottom of a straight-sided 9x13-inch baking pan. For wedges, lightly butter two 9½-inch fluted tart pans with removable bottoms.

Combine the flour, cornstarch, and salt in a medium bowl. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar, and vanilla on medium speed until smooth and creamy, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the flour mixture and mix on low speed until the dough begins to form moist clumps, about 1 minute **1**.

Turn the dough out into the prepared pan (if making wedges, divide the dough between the two pans). Using lightly floured fingertips, press the dough into the pan(s) to form an even layer **2**.

For rectangular cookies, use a bench knife or a paring knife to cut the dough all the way through into 40 bars **3**. With the tines of a fork, prick each bar twice all the way through, spacing the holes evenly and on the diagonal **4**. Lightly flour the tines as necessary to prevent the dough from sticking.

For wedges, cut each pan of dough all the way through to form 12 wedges. With the tines of a fork, prick the wedges three times all the way through, spacing the holes evenly over the dough.

Freeze the dough while the oven heats.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F.

Bake the dough, rotating the pan(s) halfway through, until the top(s) looks dry and golden-brown, 30 to 40 minutes. Transfer the pan(s) to a rack. Using a paring knife or bench knife, immediately re-cut the cookies along the lines **5**. Cool completely before removing them from the pan(s), and dipping in chocolate, if you like (see p. 67).

MAKE AHEAD

Once the dough is pressed into the pan and cut, it can be wrapped and refrigerated for 1 day or frozen for up to 1 month. If freezing the dough, thaw it overnight in the refrigerator before baking.

Baked and cooled cookies can be layered between sheets of parchment or waxed paper in an airtight container and stored at room temperature for up to 4 days.

*Abby Dodge is a Fine Cooking contributing editor. Her most recent cookbook, *Desserts 4 Today: Flavorful Desserts with Just Four Ingredients*, was published last year. □*



1

Mix the dough until it begins to form moist clumps. Any more than this will toughen the dough and make the cookies less tender.



2

Pressing the dough into an even layer ensures that the cookies bake evenly and are uniformly golden-brown on top. Reflour your fingers as needed to keep the dough from sticking to them.



3

Use an 8-row by 5-column grid pattern to divide the dough into 40 bars. Each should be about 1 inch by 2½ inches, but it's fine if they're not all precisely the same.

Shortbread, Your Way

If plain vanilla isn't your thing, add one of these flavoring options.

Cardamom Whisk 1½ tsp. ground cardamom into the flour.



Double ginger Add ⅔ cup finely chopped crystallized ginger plus 4 tsp. finely grated fresh ginger along with the vanilla.



Cinnamon toast Whisk 1 tsp. ground cinnamon into the flour. Combine 2 Tbs. granulated sugar with ¾ tsp. ground cinnamon and sprinkle the mixture over the dough in the pan before baking, lightly pressing it into the surface.



Lemon Add 1 Tbs. finely grated lemon zest with the vanilla.



Espresso-chip Dissolve 1 tsp. instant espresso in the vanilla extract. Add 4 oz. finely chopped bittersweet chocolate with the flour.



4

Prick the dough with a fork, spacing the holes evenly and on the diagonal. Not only does this give the cookies a traditional look but it also helps them bake evenly.



5

Don't wait to re-cut the cookies after baking. If they cool too much, they won't cut cleanly and may even crumble.

Soul-Warming Chicken Soup

This comforting classic is easy to customize—just mix and match ingredients to make the soup you crave. **BY TONY ROSENFELD**

I'M LUCKY TO HAVE WONDERFUL CHILDHOOD MEMORIES of the chicken soup made by both of my Jewish grandmothers. Once I got old enough to cook for a living and travel a bit, I realized that lots of other people think of chicken soup just as fondly, since it holds a beloved place in almost every cuisine. Its flavors and ingredients might vary, but its standing as the most comforting of meals is universal.

The great thing about chicken soup is that once you learn the basic method, you can flavor it however you like. It starts with an easy, homemade broth—just throw a chicken and some vegetables into a pot and let them simmer. Once the chicken is cooked,

remove it, shred the meat, and return it to the soup later. Then, it's simply a matter of adding your own favorite ingredients, from spices, fresh herbs, and vegetables to noodles, grains, and beans.

You can go traditional with classic chicken noodle, or branch out to Tex-Mex chile-lime chicken soup, or Asian chicken noodle soup with bok choy and shiitake (see page 76). Or invent your own version. No matter what flavors you choose, your soup will make a delicious one-pot meal for a chilly winter night. And just think—it might even create delicious memories for the soup-eaters in your family, too.





Start by making a simple chicken broth, which gets intense flavor from a long, slow simmer.

chicken soup

*Homemade broth serves as the base for any style of chicken soup. Once that's made, follow the method and customize your soup by choosing ingredients from the different categories on the following pages. The soup can be refrigerated for up to 3 days. **Serves 6 to 8***

STEP 1

MAKE A CHICKEN BROTH

This broth is made from a whole chicken. Before you start cooking, be sure to remove the chicken's skin—you'll get a less fatty broth that won't need as much skimming. If you're pressed for time, you could skip making your own broth, but you won't get the same depth of flavor. To do this, go directly to Step 2 on the opposite page and use store-bought broth and the meat from a rotisserie chicken.

- 1 3-lb. chicken**
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces**
- 2 medium celery stalks, cut into 2-inch pieces**
- 1 medium yellow onion (about 6 oz.), cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wedges**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

Using a small sharp knife and your fingers, remove the skin from the chicken and discard it.

Rinse the chicken well and put it in a large (at least 8-quart), heavy-duty pot or Dutch oven. Add enough cold water to submerge the chicken (about 5 quarts). Cover the pot, with the lid slightly ajar. Bring to a boil over high heat and then reduce the heat to maintain a very gentle simmer. Cook, occasionally skimming off any foam that accumulates on the surface, until foam no longer rises, about 30 minutes.

Add the carrots, celery, onion, 1½ Tbs. salt, and 2 tsp. pepper and simmer until the vegetables start to soften and the chicken is completely cooked through, about 20 minutes. Using tongs and a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken to

a large rimmed baking sheet. Let cool for 10 minutes; meanwhile, continue simmering the broth, partially covered. Using your fingers, pull the meat from the bones and shred it into bite-size pieces; discard any gristle or fat. Set aside the shredded chicken while you finish the broth.

Return the carcass to the broth and simmer, partially covered, until the vegetables are completely soft and the flavor has intensified, about 30 minutes more. If at any time the water level drops below the solids, add water to cover and return to a simmer.

Remove the carcass from the broth and discard. Strain the broth through a fine sieve set over another pot or a bowl large enough to hold the broth. Gently press on the solids with a large spoon to squeeze out any remaining broth. You will have about 3 quarts. (The broth can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 3 months.)



Create your own chicken soup using our interactive Recipe Maker at FineCooking.com/extras.

For the clearest broth, remove the carcass from the pot before straining, and pour slowly so any sediment remains in the bottom of the pot.





No matter which aromatics you choose, be sure to brown them lightly to deepen their flavor. Any spices or hardy herbs also benefit from brief cooking.

STEP 2

COOK THE AROMATICS

Basic aromatics serve as the flavor foundation for your soup. If you like, you can also add extra aromatics, selecting ones that complement the flavors of the soup you're making.

1½ Tbs. olive oil or canola oil
Kosher salt

Wash and thoroughly dry the broth pot. Heat the oil in the pot over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Add your choice of **basic aromatics**, **extra aromatics**, if using, and ½ Tbs. salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are softened and lightly browned in places, 4 to 6 minutes. Add your choice of **spices or hardy herbs**, if using, and cook, stirring, until they become fragrant, about 30 seconds.

Basic Aromatics

Choose up to three, for up to 4 cups total



Carrot,
cut into ¼-inch dice



Onion, shallot, or leek,
cut into ¼-inch dice
or finely chopped



Celery,
cut into ½-inch dice



Fennel,
cut into ¼-inch dice

Extra Aromatics (optional)

Choose up to three



Fresh chiles
(jalapeño, Anaheim,
poblano, Thai bird;
1 or 2), cut into
thin disks



Lemongrass
(1 or 2 stalks), trimmed,
cut into 4-inch pieces,
and smashed with the
side of a chef's knife



Ginger
(2-inch knob),
peeled and
thinly sliced



Garlic
(1 or 2 medium cloves),
minced

Spices and Hardy Herbs (optional)

Choose one or two



Bay leaves
(1 or 2)



Chili powder
(up to 2 tsp.)



Ground coriander
(up to 1 tsp.)



Cinnamon stick
(1, about 3 inches)



Ground cumin
(up to 2 tsp.)



Dried chipotle chili
(1)



Fresh thyme
(up to 2 tsp. chopped)



Fresh rosemary
(up to 2 tsp. chopped)

STEP 3

SIMMER

Add 3 quarts of the broth and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook, stirring, until the vegetables are completely tender and the aromatics have infused the broth, 20 to 30 minutes. Fish out and discard any large aromatics or spices.

Food styling by Mariana Velasquez

**STEP 4****ADD STARCHES AND VEGETABLES**

Stir in the reserved shredded chicken and your choice of **starches** and **vegetables**. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until all are tender and the flavors meld, 5 to 10 minutes.

Starches

Choose one or two



Potatoes
(red or yellow), peeled, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice, and cooked until barely tender (up to 4 cups)



Tiny pastas
(ditalini, acini de pepe, orzo), cooked until barely tender (up to 4 cups)



Canned beans
(cannellini, black, kidney, pinto, garbanzo), rinsed well (up to 3 cups)



Noodles
(egg, udon, soba, ramen), cooked until barely tender and rinsed (up to 5 cups)



Rice
(long-grain white or brown), cooked until barely tender (up to 3 cups)



Grains
(barley, farro, bulgur, hominy), cooked until barely tender (up to 3 cups)

Vegetables

Choose one or two



Spinach
(up to 10 oz.), stemmed if large, and cut into 2-inch pieces



Napa cabbage, cored, cut into 1½-inch pieces (up to 6 cups)



Escarole, cored, cut into 1-inch pieces (up to 9 cups)



Swiss chard
(up to $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.), stemmed and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces



Baby bok choy
(up to $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.), thinly sliced



Mushrooms
(shiitake, oyster; up to 8 oz.), stemmed if necessary and thinly sliced



Corn kernels, fresh or thawed frozen (up to 1½ cups)



Peas, fresh or thawed frozen (up to 1½ cups)



Canned diced tomatoes, drained (up to 1½ cups)

STEP 5

FINISH THE SOUP

Stir in your choice of **finishes**, adding a little at a time and adjusting the flavor as you go. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Ladle into bowls and **garnish**, if you like, before serving.

Finishes

Choose up to four

		
Lemon or lime juice (1 Tbs. at a time, up to 4 Tbs.)	Soy sauce (1 Tbs. at a time, up to 3 Tbs.)	Sesame oil ($\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. at a time, up to 1 Tbs.)
		
Vinegar (red or white wine, sherry, cider, rice; 1 tsp. at a time, up to 2 Tbs.)	Heavy cream (2 Tbs. at a time, up to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	Fish sauce (1 tsp. at a time, up to 2 Tbs.)
		
Delicate fresh herbs (basil, cilantro, tarragon, parsley, dill, chives, mint), thinly sliced or chopped (up to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup total)	Hot sauce (like Tabasco or Sriracha; $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. at a time, up to 2 tsp.)	Sugar/brown sugar (1 tsp. at a time, up to 2 Tbs.)

Garnishes (optional)

Choose up to two

	
Crisp tortilla strips (small handful per serving)	Crisp bacon, crumbled (about 1 Tbs. per serving)
	
Scallions, thinly sliced (about 1 Tbs. per serving)	Parmigiano-Reggiano, freshly grated (about 1 Tbs. per serving)

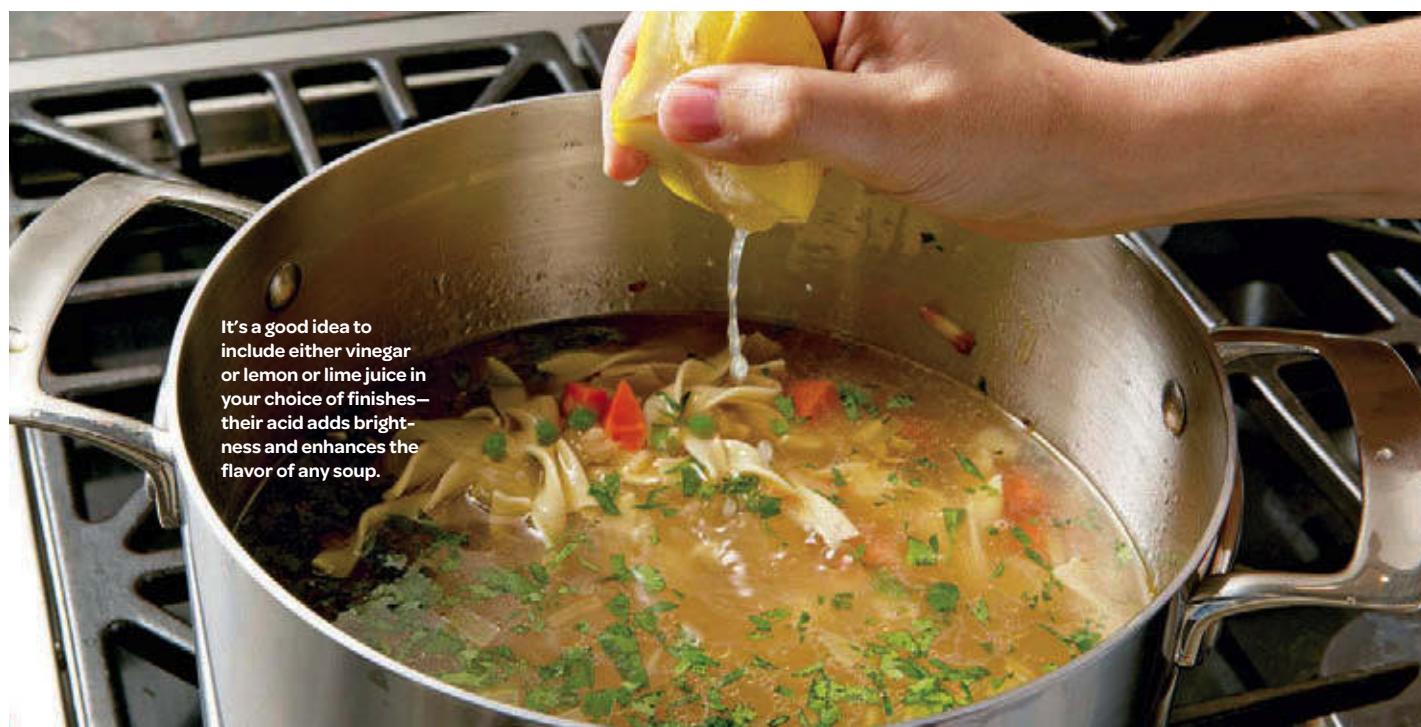
Classic Chicken Noodle Soup

Aromatics: carrot,

onion, leek

Herb: thyme**Starch:** egg noodles**Vegetable:** peas**Finishes:** lemon

juice, parsley



Chicken soup can take almost any direction—these are a few of my favorites.

Tex-Mex Chile-Lime Chicken Soup

Aromatics: onion, garlic, jalapeño

Spices: chili powder, cumin

Starch: hominy

Vegetables: corn, tomatoes

Finishes: cilantro, lime juice

Garnish: tortilla strips



Chicken and Rice Soup with Spinach, Lemon, and Dill

Aromatics: onion, carrot, celery

Herb: bay leaf

Starch: white rice

Vegetable: spinach

Finishes: dill, lemon juice

Garnish: scallions



Chicken Soup with White Beans, Farro, and Escarole

Aromatics: fennel, leek

Herb: rosemary

Starches: cannellini beans, farro

Vegetable: escarole

Finish: red wine vinegar

Garnish: Parmigiano



Chicken Soup with Barley, Mushrooms, and Greens

Aromatics: onion, celery

Herb: thyme

Starch: barley

Vegetables: Swiss chard, shiitake and oyster mushrooms

Finish: sherry vinegar

Garnish: Parmigiano



Chicken Noodle Soup with Baby Bok Choy and Shiitake

Aromatics: carrot, ginger, Thai bird chiles

Starch: ramen noodles

Vegetables: baby bok choy, shiitake mushrooms

Finishes: soy sauce, sesame oil, white vinegar, brown sugar

Garnish: scallions



Chicken Corn Chowder

Aromatics: onion, chiles

Herb: thyme

Starch: potatoes

Vegetable: corn

Finish: heavy cream

Garnishes: scallions, bacon

Tony Rosenfeld is a Fine Cooking contributing editor. He is the author of 150 Things to Make with Roast Chicken (And 50 Ways to Roast It) and Sear, Sauce, and Serve: Mastering High-Heat, High-Flavor Cooking. □



Sweet Potato SECRETS

For delicious results every time, use dry heat and don't give in to their sugary side. **BY MARTHA HOLMBERG**

WHEN MY HUSBAND AND I MARRIED 16 years ago, I quickly discovered that he was an avid sweet potato eater. By avid, I mean that every other day I would open the oven to find a baking sheet with three or four sweet potatoes on it, collapsed and glistening with sticky juices. I'd watch as he'd pluck one from the baking sheet and eat it as if it were a Snickers bar.

Before then, sweet potatoes hadn't been a part of my regular cooking repertoire, simply because I had always thought of them as, well, too sweet. That changed when I began to experiment with this now ever-present ingredient in my kitchen. I tried out different cooking methods and fiddled with flavor pairings. With time, I unlocked the two secrets to making sweet potatoes that were dense, lusciously soft, and not just sweet but complex in flavor, too.

Drive off excess moisture with dry heat.

Sweet potatoes have a high moisture content. Dry-heat cooking methods like roasting,

baking, and sautéing reduce that moisture, making them dense and more concentrated in flavor, and promoting the caramelization of their sugars. Moist-heat methods like steaming and simmering add liquid, resulting in soggy sweet potatoes with a wan flavor.

Temper their sweetness with something savory.

As their name would imply, sweet potatoes are sweet—sometimes cloyingly so. I tame their sugary nature with spicy, salty, tangy, and earthy flavors. Doing this turns a simply sweet dish into one that's intriguingly complex. Reach for robust cheeses like Parmigiano-Reggiano and Gruyère, warming spices like cumin and cinnamon, fresh herbs like basil and mint, or chiles for a hit of spicy heat.

Now that I know how to cook sweet potatoes, I use them in many ways—for a new take on shepherd's pie, in a simple sauté, and as an alternative to french fries. Twice-baked sweet potatoes? They're a given. Try any of these recipes and you'll understand why, these days, the sweet potatoes in our oven are usually all mine.

SWEET POTATOES VS. YAMS:

There Isn't Always a Difference

In winter, grocery stores everywhere advertise their bounty of sweet potatoes and yams. But here's a little secret: Those "yams" are likely sweet potatoes.

The sweet potato plant originated in South America; its roots are sweet and moist, with smooth skin. Yams, by contrast, are long, rough-skinned, starchy, not very sweet tubers that hail from Africa and Asia; they're rarely found in standard grocery stores.

So why the mix-up? It may have started in the South, where African slaves called sweet potatoes *nyami* (to eat) because they looked like yams from their homeland; *nyami* became "yam." The name spread when Louisiana-based producers, in an effort to distinguish their new orange-fleshed sweet potatoes from white-fleshed varieties grown elsewhere, called their sweet potatoes "yams."



sweet potato cottage pie

A cottage pie is like a shepherd's pie, except that it's made with beef, not lamb. Here, a hearty filling of ground beef, salty olives, savory tomatoes, and warming spices like chile powder, cumin, and cinnamon rein in the sweetness of the creamy sweet potato topping. **Serves 4 to 6**

FOR THE TOPPING

- 2 large sweet potatoes (about 2 lb. total)
- ½ cup whole milk
- ¾ oz. (¼ cup) finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter, softened
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE FILLING

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 2 medium celery stalks, cut into ¼-inch dice (about ¾ cup)
- 1 large carrot, cut into ¼-inch dice (about ¾ cup)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped (about 1½ cups)
- Kosher salt

3 medium cloves garlic, minced

- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh oregano or ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. ancho chile powder or other pure chile powder
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1½ lb. ground beef (85% lean)
- 1 14-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes
- ½ cup coarsely chopped pimento-stuffed green olives
- ½ cup coarsely chopped raisins or dried cranberries

PREPARE THE TOPPING

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Line a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet with foil.

Slice the sweet potatoes in half lengthwise and set them cut side down on the baking sheet. Roast until very tender, about 30 minutes.

When cool enough to handle, scoop the flesh into a medium mixing bowl. Add the milk, cheese, butter, 1 tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper and beat with an electric hand mixer on low speed until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Set aside.

PREPARE THE FILLING

Heat the oil in a 12-inch sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the celery, carrot, onion, and 1 tsp. salt. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are soft, fragrant, and starting to turn golden, 10 to 15 minutes. Add the garlic, cumin, oregano, chile powder, and cinnamon and cook for 30 seconds. Add the beef, season with 2 tsp. salt, and cook until no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Tilt the pan and spoon off all



Don't have a 9x9-inch baking dish on hand? You can use another size dish, but keep in mind that the thickness of the meat and sweet potato layers will change, and the baking time may need to be adjusted.

but about 1 Tbs. of the fat; return the pan to the heat.

Pour the tomatoes and their juice into a small bowl and crush them with your hands or a fork. Add the tomatoes to the meat and cook, uncovered, until thick, 10 to 12 minutes. Add the olives and raisins and cook for another minute; season to taste with salt.

ASSEMBLE AND BAKE THE PIE

Transfer the beef mixture to a 9x9-inch baking dish. Spread the sweet potatoes over the top in an even layer. Bake until bubbling around edges, about 30 minutes. Switch the oven to a high-broil setting and position the rack about 6 inches from the broiler element. Broil the pie until the sweet potatoes are a bit browned, 2 to 4 minutes.

Let cool at least 15 minutes before serving.

sweet potato oven fries with fry sauce

Delicious on their own, these smoky, slightly sweet fries are downright dangerous when dipped into a zesty spin on fry sauce, a ketchup-and-mayonnaise-based condiment popular in Utah, Idaho, and the Pacific Northwest. **Serves 4 to 6**

Cooking spray

- 1 lb. sweet potatoes (about 1 large)
- 2 large egg whites
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- Kosher salt
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 2 Tbs. ketchup
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- ½ tsp. soy sauce
- ½ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 drops hot sauce, such as Sriracha

Position racks in the bottom and top thirds of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Spray two baking sheets with cooking spray.

Peel and cut the potatoes into approximately 2-inch lengths, and then cut each piece lengthwise into ¼-inch-wide slices. Lay the slices flat and cut them into ¼-inch strips, so you have ¼ x ¼ x 2-inch sticks.

Whisk the egg whites with the smoked paprika, cumin, and 1 tsp. salt in a medium

bowl. Toss the potatoes in the mixture to thoroughly coat. Spread them on the baking sheets in a single layer so that they're not touching.

Roast the sweet potatoes until sizzling and starting to brown on the bottom, about 10 minutes. With a spatula, carefully loosen the fries and shake the baking sheet to flip them. Rotate the placement of the baking sheets in the oven and continue to bake until the fries are lightly browned, sizzling vigorously, and tender all the way through, another 8 to 9 minutes. Sprinkle to taste with more salt.

Meanwhile, make the fry sauce. In a small bowl, stir the mayonnaise, ketchup, lemon juice, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and hot sauce. Adjust the seasonings until the sauce tastes zesty but balanced.

Serve the oven fries immediately with the fry sauce.

Tossing sweet potatoes with egg whites before baking ensures that they come out with a nicely browned coating. They won't get fully crisp, as a regular potato would, but they'll have a satisfying texture.



twice-baked sweet potatoes with leeks and sausage

In these comforting stuffed sweet potatoes, fresh herbs, salty sausage, Gruyère, and sour cream are delicious, savory counterpoints to the sweet potatoes and leeks. Serve them as a main dish or as an accompaniment to seared steak or roast chicken. **Serves 4 as a main course; 8 as a side dish**

- 4 small sweet potatoes (about 8 oz. each)
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- ½ lb. bulk sweet Italian sausage (or link sausage, casings removed)
- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 1 lb. leeks, white and light-green parts only, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced (about 2 cups)
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh sage
- ¼ tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- Kosher salt
- ½ cup sour cream
- ¼ cup grated Gruyère

Position a rack in the center of the oven

and heat the oven to 375°F. Line a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet with parchment or foil.

Poke the sweet potatoes a few times with the tip of a knife and arrange them on the baking sheet. Bake until completely tender when pierced in the fattest part with a skewer, 35 to 60 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the sausage, reduce the heat to medium, and cook, breaking it into small bits with the edge of a slotted spoon, until no longer pink, 5 to 6 minutes. Transfer to a plate and set aside.

Pour off all but 1 Tbs. of the fat and add the butter. When it melts, add the leeks, sage, thyme, and 1½ tsp. salt. Cook, stir-

ring, until the mixture just starts to sizzle. Reduce the heat to low and cook, stirring frequently, until the leeks are very soft and starting to turn golden, 10 to 15 minutes.

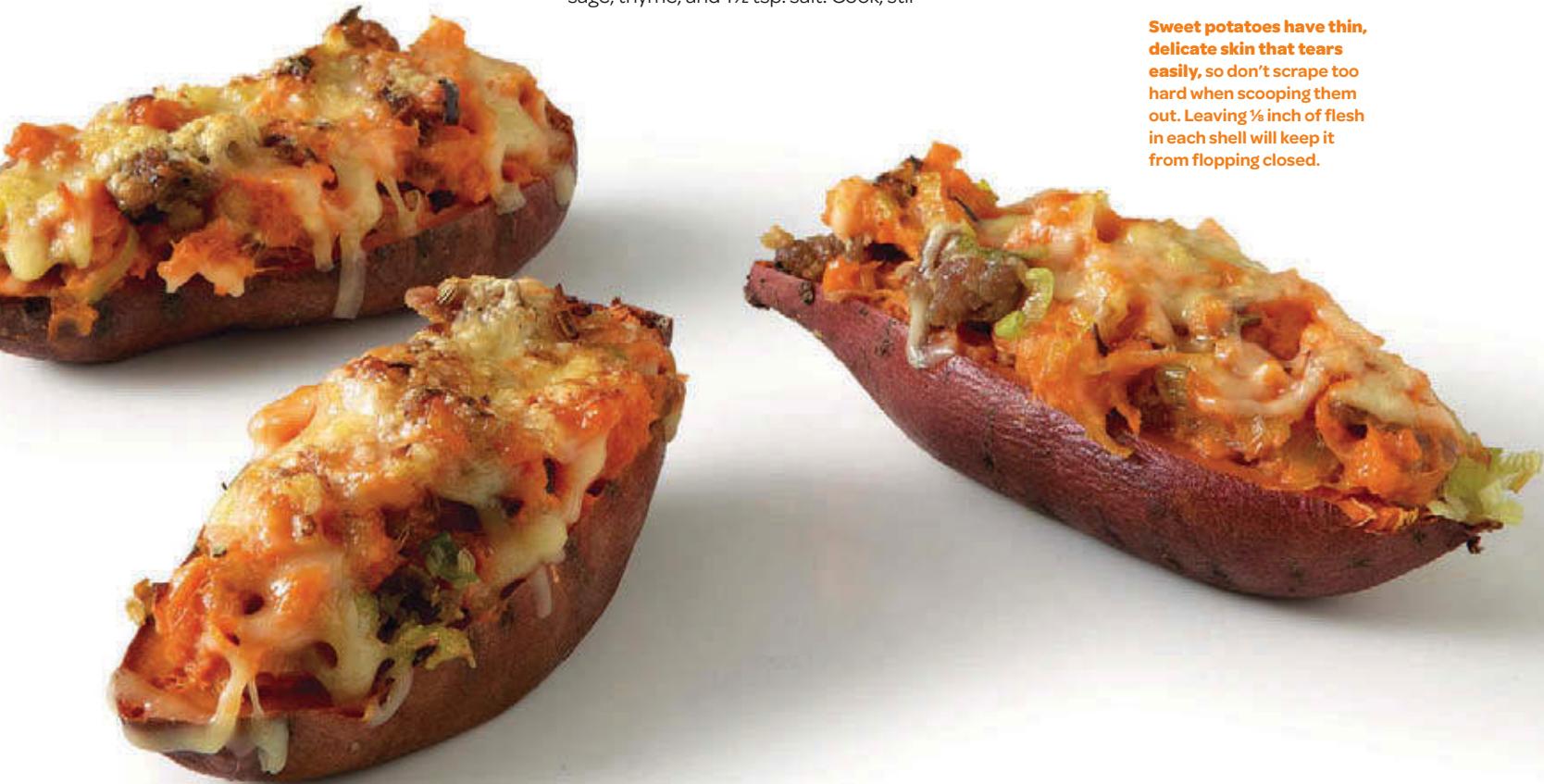
When the sweet potatoes are cool

enough to handle, carefully cut them in half lengthwise and gently scoop the flesh into a medium bowl, leaving about ½ inch of flesh in the shells. Mash the scooped flesh with a fork or potato masher until smooth. Stir in the sour cream and 1 tsp. salt. Fold the sausage and leeks into the mashed sweet potato and season to taste with salt.

Position a rack 6 inches from the broiler element

and heat the broiler on high. Mound the filling into the potato skins and top with the cheese. Put the potatoes in a 9x13-inch baking dish and broil until the cheese is golden, about 4 minutes. Serve immediately.

Food styling by Rebecca Jurkevich



Sweet potatoes have thin, delicate skin that tears easily, so don't scrape too hard when scooping them out. Leaving ½ inch of flesh in each shell will keep it from flopping closed.



sautéed sweet potatoes with orange-mint gremolata

Here, sweet potatoes are lightly browned and tossed with a simple gremolata—a garnish of citrus zest, chopped herbs, and garlic—for a bright hit of flavor. Toasted pecans lend crunch and richness. Serve with pan-seared pork chops. **Serves 4**

- 3 Tbs. olive oil
- 3 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 1½ lb. sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice (about 5 cups)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbs. coarsely chopped toasted pecans
- 3 Tbs. lightly packed, coarsely chopped fresh mint
- 1 small clove garlic, coarsely chopped
- 2 tsp. lightly packed, finely grated orange zest

Heat the oil and butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium-low heat. When the butter stops foaming, add the potatoes in an even layer and season generously with salt and pepper. Cook, shaking the pan occasionally, until the potatoes just start to brown underneath, about 10 minutes. Carefully toss the potatoes with a spoon, reduce the heat to low, and

continue cooking, tossing occasionally, until the potatoes are soft and easily pierced with a fork, about 10 minutes. Add the pecans and toss until fragrant. Transfer to a serving bowl.

Meanwhile, mince the mint and garlic together on a cutting board; add to the sweet potatoes along with the orange zest and toss. Season with a generous pinch of salt and serve immediately.

Martha Holmberg is a frequent Fine Cooking contributor and the editor of Fine Cooking: In Season, a book dedicated to cooking with seasonal ingredients. □



Go to FineCooking.com/extras for a recipe for Sweet Potato Cupcakes with Maple Cream Cheese Frosting.

Tailor this dish to your taste by replacing the orange, mint, and pecans with your favorite ingredients. Try lemon or lime zest; parsley, cilantro, or dill; and pine nuts, almonds, or walnuts.

German Chocolate Cake

Bake the classic chocolate-coconut-pecan layer cake, or dress it up as a modern glazed chocolate bombe. **BY ALICE MEDRICH AND KAREN HATFIELD**



Name Game

This cake isn't German at all. In 1852, employee Samuel German created a chocolate bar for Baker's Chocolate Company. Named in his honor, Baker's German's Sweet Chocolate Bar inspired the cake, known then as German's chocolate cake.



Lone Star Cake

The first printed recipe for the dessert appeared in a Dallas newspaper in 1957. It ignited a national craze, and sales for German's chocolate bars soared by 73 percent the next year.



Bittersweet Symphony

Mild German's chocolate contains only 46 percent cacao solids, which makes for a subtly flavored cake. This recipe uses a moderate amount of semisweet or bittersweet chocolate for deeper flavor.



Milky Way

This isn't your typical butter-and-sugar frosting. Toasted coconut and pecans are stirred into a caramel made by simmering evaporated milk until golden.



THE CLASSIC

Alice Medrich is a master baker and chocolate guru who's written several books on the subject, including *Bittersweet: Recipes and Tales from a Life in Chocolate*. Her ultimate recipe for German chocolate cake combines a sweet, gooey, coconut-and-pecan-studded filling with three layers of light, tender chocolate cake.



THE UPDATE

Karen Hatfield, the co-owner and pastry chef of Hatfield's restaurant in Los Angeles, is known for her sophisticated yet approachable desserts. Here, she offers her creative spin on the classic dessert: individual ganache-glazed chocolate cake bombes filled with decadent chocolate mousse and creamy coconut-pecan filling.



1

Mix the beaten eggs into the batter a little at a time over the course of 1½ minutes to properly aerate the batter. This gives the finished cakes a light, tender crumb.



2

Stir the coconut every couple of minutes so it toasts evenly, and watch carefully, as it can go from toasted to burnt in seconds.

german chocolate cake

You can use any semisweet or bittersweet chocolate you like for this cake, as long as it contains 70% cacao or less. Any more than that could adversely affect the cake's moist, tender texture. Serves 16

FOR THE CAKES

- 4 oz. (½ cup) unsalted butter, softened; more for the pans
- 4 oz. semisweet or bittersweet chocolate (up to 70% cacao), coarsely chopped (about 1 cup)
- ½ cup boiling water
- 9 oz. (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. table salt
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup buttermilk, at room temperature

FOR THE COCONUT-PECAN FILLING

- 7 oz. (about 2 cups) sweetened, shredded dried coconut (see Test Kitchen, p. 89, for more information)
- 4 large egg yolks
- 1 12-oz. can evaporated milk
- 1½ cups granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- ¾ tsp. table salt
- 6 oz. (¾ cup) unsalted butter, cut into chunks
- 1½ cups pecan halves, toasted and coarsely chopped

MAKE THE CAKES

Position racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Grease the sides of three 9x2-inch round cake pans with butter and line the bottoms with parchment circles.

Put the chocolate in a small bowl and pour the boiling water over it. Let stand for several seconds and then whisk until the chocolate is dissolved. Set aside until cool to the touch before mixing the batter.

Sift the flour, baking soda, and salt onto a sheet of waxed paper. Whisk the eggs in a small measuring cup.

Beat the butter for a few seconds in a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on medium-low speed. Add the sugar in a steady stream and then beat on medium speed, scraping the bowl as necessary, until the mixture is lightened in color and fluffy, 4 to 5 minutes. Still on medium speed, add the



3

The key to this filling is to cook it, stirring constantly to avoid burning, until golden and thick. This gives it a delicious caramelized flavor and a dense consistency.



4

Leave a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch border around each cake layer as you spread the filling so it doesn't overflow under the weight of the next layer.

eggs a little at a time, taking a full $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes to add them all **1**. Add the melted chocolate and vanilla and beat just until blended. With the mixer turned off, add a quarter of the flour mixture. Mix on medium-low speed just until incorporated. Add a third of the buttermilk and mix until blended. Repeat, each time adding another quarter of the flour, then a third of the buttermilk, until the last of the flour is added. Scrape the bowl as necessary and mix each addition only until it is incorporated.

Divide the batter among the pans and spread it evenly. Bake, rotating the pans and swapping their positions, until the cakes just start to pull away from the sides of the pans and spring back when very gently pressed with a finger, 20 to 25 minutes. Let the cakes cool in their pans on a rack for 10 minutes.

Run a knife or small spatula around the edges to separate the cakes from the pans.

Turn the cakes out onto the rack and peel off the parchment. Cool completely.

MAKE THE FILLING

Spread the coconut on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake at 350°F , stirring every 2 minutes, until golden-brown **2**, about 10 minutes. Scrape the toasted coconut onto a sheet of waxed paper and let cool completely.

Whisk the egg yolks with the evaporated milk, sugar, vanilla, and salt in a heavy-duty, nonreactive 4-quart saucepan. Add the butter. Set over medium heat and stir constantly with a heatproof spatula, scraping the bottom and corners of the pot. When the mixture starts to boil, adjust the heat so that it boils actively but not furiously, and cook, stirring constantly, until golden and thickened **3**, 3 to 4 minutes. Off the heat, stir in the coconut and pecans. Let cool completely.

ASSEMBLE THE CAKE

Put one cake layer on a cake plate. Spread a third of the filling over the top of the cake, leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch border. Top with a second cake layer. Spread with half of the remaining filling **4**. Put the third cake layer on top and cover it with the remaining filling. Leave the sides of the cake exposed. Serve at room temperature.

The cake will keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Let it come back to cool room temperature before serving.



Which version is your favorite? Go to FineCooking.com/extras and let us know.



1

After pouring the cake batter into the pan, tap it on the counter to break any air pockets. This also spreads and levels the batter so the finished bombs are even.



2

The filling is fully cooked when it coats the back of a spoon and leaves a trail when you draw a finger through it. Any bits of cooked egg in the filling won't be noticeable when it's finished.



3

When melting the chocolate, adjust the heat under the skillet if the water gets too hot—it should be barely simmering so the chocolate doesn't scorch.

german chocolate bombs

These show-stopping desserts are the perfect ending for a dinner party because you can make them ahead. Turn to p. 96 for a source for the silicone bombe molds. This recipe contains raw eggs; if that's a concern, buy pasteurized.

Yields 10 individual bombs

FOR THE CAKE

- Cooking spray
- 4 oz. unsweetened chocolate, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 1 oz. ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) natural cocoa powder
- 1½ cups boiling water
- 7 oz. (1½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 1½ cups packed dark brown sugar
- 8 oz. (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- ½ cup buttermilk, at room temperature
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

FOR THE COCONUT-PECAN FILLING

- 3¼ oz. (about 1 cup) sweetened, shredded dried coconut, toasted and cooled (see Test Kitchen, p. 89, for more information)
- 3 oz. ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) pecans, toasted and cooled

FOR THE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 2½ oz. (5 Tbs.) unsalted butter, cut into chunks
- 6 large egg yolks
- 1 5-oz. can evaporated milk
- ½ tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 3½ oz. (7 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- 2 large eggs, separated
- 1 Tbs. granulated sugar
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- ¼ tsp. pure vanilla extract
- Pinch kosher salt

FOR THE GLAZE

- 4 oz. bittersweet chocolate (preferably 70% cacao), finely chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2 Tbs. light corn syrup
- 1 cup heavy cream

MAKE THE CAKE

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F. Coat a 13x18-inch rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.

Put the chocolate and cocoa in a medium heatproof bowl, add the boiling water, and whisk to combine and melt the chocolate. Set aside to cool slightly. In a small bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, and salt.

Beat the sugar and butter in a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes, stopping to scrape the bowl halfway through. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Slowly add the buttermilk and vanilla—the batter will look curdled at this point. Reduce the mixer speed to low. Alternate adding the flour mixture (in 3 additions) with the chocolate mixture (in 2 additions), ending with the flour mixture. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan **1** and tap the pan on the counter to level the batter.

Bake until the cake springs back when poked in the center with a finger, about 20 minutes. Cool completely in the pan on



4

Use the back of a small spoon to smear the chocolate mousse evenly inside each mold. The more uniform the layers, the better the bombes will look.



5

Top each filled mold with a round of cake, gently pressing the cake into the coconut-pecan mixture to eliminate any air pockets and create a solid base for the bombes.



6

For even coating, slowly pour the glaze over the bombes in a steady circular motion, starting at the top and moving to the sides. Be sure the bombes are at cool room temperature so the glaze doesn't freeze on contact.

a wire rack. (Well-wrapped, the cake will keep for up to 2 days in the refrigerator, or up to 1 month in the freezer.)

MAKE THE COCONUT-PECAN FILLING

Pulse the coconut and pecans in a food processor until they resemble coarse cornmeal. **Combine the sugar, butter, egg yolks**, evaporated milk, and vanilla in a 3-quart saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a spoon or spatula, until the mixture is thick enough to coat the spoon and hold a trail when a finger is drawn through it, 6 to 7 minutes **2**. Transfer to a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment and whip on high speed until cooled, fluffy, and slightly lightened in color, 6 to 10 minutes. Add the coconut-pecan mixture and beat on medium speed until combined, 1 minute more. Refrigerate until ready to use. (You can refrigerate the filling for up to 1 week.)

MAKE THE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Melt the chocolate and butter in a large bowl set in a skillet of barely simmering water **3**.

Remove from the heat and stir with a spatula to combine. Set aside to cool slightly.

Whip the egg whites in a clean stand mixer fitted with a clean whisk attachment on medium-high speed to soft peaks, 1 to 2 minutes. Slowly add the sugar and continue to whip to stiff peaks, 3 to 4 minutes.

In a medium bowl, whip the cream with a whisk or electric hand mixer to medium-stiff peaks.

In a small bowl, combine the egg yolks, vanilla, and salt. Mix the egg yolk mixture into the chocolate mixture with a spatula. Fold in the whipped egg whites, then fold in the whipped cream—there shouldn't be any visible streaks.

ASSEMBLE THE BOMBES

Set two silicone bombe molds that hold at least 5 bombes each (3½-inch diameter and ½-cup capacity) on a 13x18-inch rimmed baking sheet.

Turn the cake out onto a cutting board. Use a 3½-inch round cutter to cut 10 circles from the chocolate cake. Reserve the remaining cake for another use (see Test Kitchen, p. 89, for suggestions).

Scoop about ¼ cup of the mousse into each mold and smear it evenly all over the insides

of the molds with the back of a small spoon **4**. Refrigerate or freeze until set, 10 to 20 minutes. Evenly distribute the coconut-pecan filling among the molds (about 2½ Tbs. each), and then gently press a cake circle into each mold **5**. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze overnight.

Unmold the frozen bombes one at a time onto a wire rack set in a rimmed baking sheet. Let sit until nearly room temperature, 2 to 3 hours.

GLAZE THE BOMBES

Put the chopped chocolate and corn syrup in a medium stainless-steel bowl. In a small saucepan, heat the cream over medium-high heat until just boiling, then pour it over the chocolate mixture and let sit for 3 minutes. Whisk gently until smooth. Transfer to a liquid measuring cup for easy pouring.

Pour the glaze evenly over the bombes to coat them completely **6**. Refrigerate until set, about 2 hours. (Glaze the bombes no more than 8 hours in advance.)

Let the bombes sit at room temperature for about 30 minutes before serving. □

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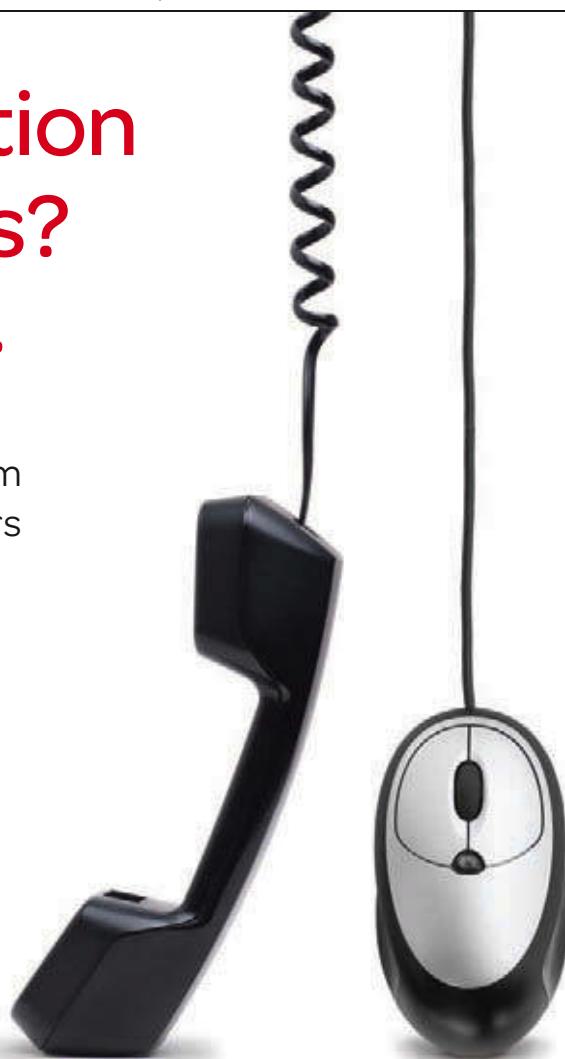
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TEST KITCHEN

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TIP

Remove portabello gills before cooking

In the recipe for Portobello Mushrooms with Creamy Spinach-Artichoke Filling on page 14, we recommend removing the gills on the undersides of the mushrooms because they're bitter and release a black liquid as they cook. It's a good idea to do this whenever you use portobellos, whether the recipe calls for it or not. To get rid of the gills, just scrape them off with a table knife. Its rounded tip is great for getting to the hard-to-reach area under the edge of the mushroom cap.

—Denise Mickelsen



TECHNIQUE

How to cut citrus segments

CITRUS FRUITS ARE AT THEIR BEST RIGHT NOW, and juicy segments of orange or grapefruit, cut free from their tough dividing membranes, make a bright addition to desserts, salsas, and salads of all kinds (like

the Oranges in Cardamom Syrup with Honey Whipped Cream on page 15 and the Frisée, Avocado, and Grapefruit Salad on page 65). Also known as *suprêmes*, they're simple to prepare. —D. M.



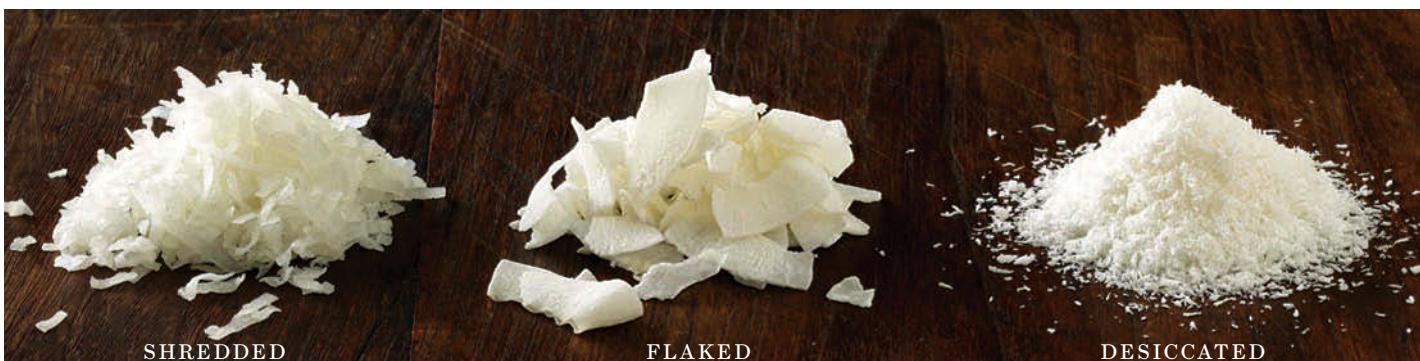
Slice off the blossom and stem ends of the fruit with a sharp paring or utility knife. A small serrated knife works well, too.



Stand the fruit on one of its cut ends and slice off the outer skin in strips, following the natural curve of the fruit from top to bottom. Try to remove all of the bitter white pith without sacrificing too much of the sweet flesh.



Working over a bowl to catch the juice and using the membranes as guides, cut the segments free from the membranes, letting each one fall into the bowl as you go. Once all the suprêmes are free, squeeze the empty wheel of membranes to get the last drops of juice.



INGREDIENT

Dried coconut, three ways

WHILE TESTING THE GERMAN CHOCOLATE CAKE and German Chocolate Bombe recipes on pages 84 and 86, we noticed that the labels for dried coconut—whether shredded, flaked, or desiccated—can be confusing. Here's a quick clarification:

Shredded coconut is fresh coconut that's been shredded and dried. The size ranges from fine threads to coarse flakes, and moisture levels vary, too, despite the fact that it's dried. Shredded coconut is available both sweetened (typically found in the supermarket's baking aisle) and unsweetened (more often found in health food stores). Sweetened shredded coconut tends to be moister than unsweetened, and it's a great ingredient for desserts and baked goods. Use unsweetened shredded coconut in savory dishes.

Flaked coconut is similar to shredded but comes in wider, flatter pieces. It's available sweetened or unsweetened, and it makes a perfect garnish, thanks to its crunchy texture.

Desiccated coconut is dehydrated and very finely ground. It's drier and more powdery than shredded coconut, so it's great for adding pure coconut flavor without changing the texture of your food. When shopping for desiccated coconut, be aware that some producers label their shredded coconut as desiccated, no matter the size of the pieces, because the word means dried or dehydrated.

Store all types of dried coconut in a cool, dry place for up to a month, or freeze in an airtight container for up to a year. —D. M.



JELLY

JAM

PRESERVES

GLOSSARY**Jelly vs. jam vs. preserves**

Preserves are put to delicious use in the Plum-Glazed Duck Breasts on page 13, but have you ever wondered what they are exactly? And for that matter, how they differ from jam and jelly? Read on to find out.

JELLY is a clear fruit spread made from cooked fruit juice and sugar, and possibly pectin, which helps it gel and thicken. After the initial cooking, jelly is strained through a muslin stockinette or "jelly bag" to remove any solids.

JAM is a thick spread made from fruit juice, chopped, crushed, or puréed fruit, and sugar. Pectin may also be added to help it gel, but jams are usually looser than jellies. Jam typically contains a bit of fruit pulp, so it's not entirely transparent.

PRESERVES are another thick fruit spread made from fruit cooked with sugar, but in this case, large pieces of the fruit, or the whole fruit (as in the case of berries), are suspended in a firm jelly or less-gelled syrupy base. Unlike jams and jellies, preserves are chunky in texture. —Julissa Roberts

TIP**Store maple syrup in the fridge**

Pure maple syrup contains no preservatives and needs to be refrigerated after opening to protect the syrup's flavor and prevent mold from growing. An opened container of maple syrup lasts for up to a year in the fridge. —J.R.

**INGREDIENT**

Tasty uses for cake scraps

If you make the German Chocolate Bombes on page 86, you'll have scraps of chocolate cake left over after cutting cake rounds to fit inside the bombe molds. The scraps make for a tasty cook's treat, but here are a few more suggestions for using them up. —J.R.

Chocolate Cake Parfaits

In a tall glass, layer cake scraps with scoops of your favorite ice cream and crushed pralines or toffee. Drizzle with hot fudge or warm caramel sauce.

Chocolate Tres Leches Cake

Pack the cake scraps in a round baking dish. Combine 1 cup each evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk, and whole milk with a pinch of salt and pour over the scraps. Soak for 1 hour. Scoop into bowls and serve with sweetened whipped cream.

Chocolate Crunchies

Pulse the cake scraps in a food processor until pea-size. Toast on a baking sheet in a 350°F oven until dry and crunchy. Cool completely and then use as a topping for pudding, ice cream, mousse, or yogurt.

Chocolate-Peanut Butter Ice Cream Sandwiches

Cut matching pieces of cake from the scraps, spread peanut butter on one side of half of the slices, and top with vanilla ice cream. Cover the ice cream with a matching cake slice and freeze until firm, about 10 minutes.

The holiday twist that will...



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INGREDIENT

Why we ❤️ kosher salt

READERS HAVE ASKED US MANY TIMES WHY WE USE KOSHER SALT, not table salt, in our recipes. The answer is two-fold.

Kosher salt is a flaky, large-grained salt that's used in the Jewish meat koshering process, hence its name. There is very little chemical difference between kosher and table salts—both are made predominately from sodium chloride—but table salt can also contain anticaking agents and additives like sodium iodide, while kosher salt is typically additive-free. So one reason we prefer kosher salt is that it's a purer ingredient.

But really, it's the texture of kosher salt that makes it preferable to table salt for general cooking. Its flaky texture makes kosher salt easier than fine-grained table salt to pinch and sprinkle. It also sticks to foods better and dissolves more quickly.

—J.R.

**TIP**

Working with eggs

WE GO THROUGH DOZENS OF EGGS in the test kitchen every month, and along the way we've learned a few tricks for working with them. Here are two of our favorites:



Freeze leftover egg whites

Whether you're an avid baker or you just like to make your own mayonnaise, at some point you're bound to have leftover egg whites on hand. So what to do with them? Sure, you can make meringue or macaroons right away, but you can also freeze them for future use. Put each egg white in a section of a clean ice cube tray and freeze until solid. Then pop the frozen whites from the tray and store them in a freezer bag marked with the date of storage; they will keep for two to three months. Defrost in the refrigerator for about 2 hours before using.

Quickly warm eggs to room temperature

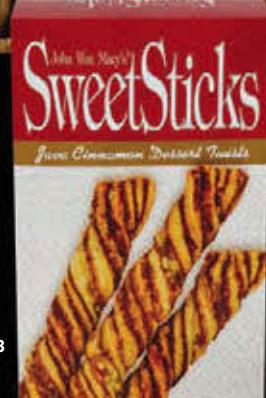
Baking recipes often call for room-temperature eggs, because if all of the ingredients start at the same temperature, they will combine better and bake more evenly. But if you didn't take your eggs out of the refrigerator early, you can put them in a bowl of lukewarm water for 5 to 10 minutes. When you remove the eggs from the water, they should feel a bit cool in your hand, but no longer cold. —J. R.



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NUTRITION

Recipes	Calories (kcal)	Fat Cal (kcal)	Protein (g)	Carb (g)	Total Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Mono Fat (g)	Poly Fat (g)	Chol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)
MAKE IT TONIGHT, P. 12											
Oranges in Cardamom Syrup with Whipped Cream	150	70	1	23	8	4.5	2	0	25	10	2
Plum-Glazed Duck Breasts	300	100	24	27	11	3	5	1.5	135	500	0
Portobello Mushrooms with Spinach-Artichoke Filling	370	280	11	17	31	9	12	6	40	650	6
Pork Chops with Green Chiles and Onions	360	160	39	10	18	4	11	2	115	810	2
Seared Scallops with Warm Radicchio and Pancetta	220	130	13	9	14	4.5	6	1.5	40	1270	1
Penne with Spinach, Gorgonzola, and Walnuts	620	260	19	72	28	14	7	5	80	560	7
CARDOONS, P. 19											
Cardoons with Garlic Butter and Parmesan	100	60	3	8	7	4.5	2	0	20	590	2
ROASTED RED PEPPERS, P. 24											
Mini Burgers with Roasted Red Pepper Relish	250	80	13	26	8	2.5	4	1	30	720	1
Corn Muffins with Roasted Red Peppers and Cheddar	90	35	2	9	4	2.5	1	0	25	140	0
GINGERBREAD COOKIES, P. 35											
Gingerbread Cookies (per cookie)	100	20	1	19	2	1.5	0.5	0	10	45	0
FOOD SCIENCE, P. 38											
Blender Mayonnaise (per 1 Tbs.)	110	100	0	0	12	1	7	3.5	10	15	0
GOOD LIFE, P. 40											
Chai-Spiced Fruit Compote with Yogurt	470	190	15	60	21	14	5	1.5	30	55	4
HOLIDAY DINNER, P. 42											
Potted Shrimp on Toast with Celery-Radish Salad	220	160	6	8	19	9	7	1	70	310	2
Spice-Rubbed Roast Beef Tenderloin with Wine Sauce	570	310	45	4	35	13	15	1.5	165	470	1
Mashed Potato and Rutabaga Gratin	220	120	4	21	14	8	3	0.5	40	490	3
Braised Fennel with Orange	90	40	2	11	4.5	0.5	3	0	0	180	4
Gingerbread-Brandy Trifle	680	320	8	80	36	20	11	2	285	240	1
LASAGNE, P. 52											
Four Cheese and Tomato Lasagne	720	370	39	46	41	22	13	2.5	220	1760	4
Butternut Squash Lasagne with Goat Cheese and Sage	480	190	17	56	21	12	5	1.5	140	690	6
Short Rib and Dried Porcini Lasagne	480	190	25	43	22	9	9	2	145	780	3
WINTER GREEN, P. 60											
Escarole Salad with Olives and Garlic Croutons	290	150	11	22	17	2.5	11	2	15	1200	7
Escarole Salad with Olives (with Lamb Chops)	540	290	39	22	33	7	20	3.5	105	1560	7
Endive and Watercress Salad with Apples and Herbs	190	120	5	16	14	3.5	7	2	15	90	6
Endive and Watercress Salad (with Chicken)	420	240	31	16	27	6	16	4	90	430	6
Frisée, Avocado, and Grapefruit Salad	360	270	4	24	30	4.5	21	3.5	0	15	10
Frisée, Avocado, and Grapefruit Salad (with Shrimp)	590	390	27	26	44	6	30	5	215	1260	10
Radicchio and Cauliflower Salad with Breadcrumbs	320	240	5	17	27	4	19	3.5	30	440	4
Radicchio and Cauliflower Salad (with Steak)	660	420	41	18	48	10	31	4.5	140	980	4
SHORTBREAD COOKIES, P. 66											
Vanilla Shortbread Cookies (per cookie)	120	60	1	12	7	4.5	2	0	20	60	0
CHICKEN SOUP, P. 70											
Classic Chicken Noodle Soup	280	70	15	42	7	1.5	3.5	1.5	30	1310	4
Chicken Soup with White Beans, Farro, and Escarole	290	60	18	45	7	1	3	1	0	1320	10
Chicken Soup with Barley, Mushrooms, and Greens	200	50	12	30	6	1	3	1	0	1360	5
Chicken Corn Chowder	270	100	12	35	11	4.5	4.5	1	20	1270	4
Tex-Mex Chile-Lime Chicken Soup	210	50	12	31	6	1.5	3.5	1	0	1530	4
Chicken Noodle Soup with Baby Bok Choy and Shiitake	300	80	15	43	9	2	4.5	2	30	1820	4
Chicken and Rice Soup with Spinach, Lemon, and Dill	200	50	12	29	6	1.5	3.5	1	0	1320	4
SWEET POTATOES, P. 77											
Sweet Potato Cottage Pie	460	210	27	36	23	9	11	1.5	85	1340	6
Twice-Baked Sweet Potatoes with Leeks and Sausage	240	100	6	30	11	4.5	4.5	1	20	560	4
Sweet Potato Oven Fries with Fry Sauce	120	70	2	12	7	1	2	4	5	370	2
Sautéed Sweet Potatoes with Orange-Mint Gremolata	290	190	3	23	21	7	11	2	25	180	4
GERMAN CHOCOLATE CAKE, P. 82											
German Chocolate Cake	590	280	8	72	31	16	10	3.5	170	360	3
German Chocolate Bombes	850	560	11	67	63	36	20	4.5	310	210	6

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used. Optional ingre-

dients with measured amounts are included; ingredients without specific quantities are not. Analyses are per serving; when a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion

is used. When the quantities of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt and $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. pepper per serving for entrées, and $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt and $\frac{1}{16}$ tsp. pepper per serving for side dishes.

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WHERE TO BUY IT

gingerbread, p. 35

- **4½-inch gingerbread boy cookie cutter**, \$3.99, annclark.com, 800-252-6798.
- **Cookie and cupcake decorating set**, \$19.95, kingarthurflour.com, 800-827-6836.
- **Lamson 3x8-inch turner spatula**, \$20.95, chefsresource.com, 866-765-2433.



shortbread, p. 66

- **Traditional finish 9x13-inch cake pan**, \$20, williams-sonoma.com, 877-812-6235.

test kitchen, p. 89

- **Wüsthof classic 4-inch paring knife**, \$54.95, cutleryandmore.com, 800-650-9866.

chicken soup, p. 70

- **Vollrath 10½-inch strainer**, \$20.95, cooking.com, 800-663-8810.

From vikingrange.com, 800-216-5775:

- **Viking 8-quart stock pot**, \$357.50.
- **Viking 5.5-quart sauce pot**, \$313.50.



winter green, p. 60

- **Oxo stainless-steel salad spinner**, \$49.99, bedbathandbeyond.com, 800-462-3966.
- **Microplane Premium Classic Series zester/grater**, \$14.95, microplaneusa.com, 866-968-6665, ext. 4999.
- **Tamahagane 10-inch slicing knife**, \$173, surlatable.com, 800-243-0852.

From crateandbarrel.com, 800-967-6696:

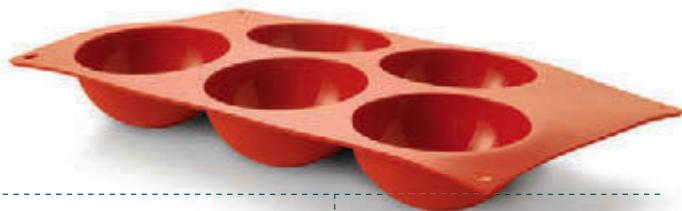
- **Marble mortar and pestle**, \$34.95.
- **Large French wire whisk**, \$10.95.

sweet choices, p. 40

- **Weck 9.8-oz Mold jars**, \$15.25 for six, weckcanning.com, 800-345-7381.

german chocolate cake, p. 82

- **KitchenAid Professional 600 Series 6-quart stand mixer**, \$399.99, shopkitchenaid.com, 800-541-6390.
- **Matfer exoglass plain round 3½-inch cutter**, \$10.50, amazon.com, 866-216-1072.
- **CIA Bakeware 12x17-inch cooling rack**, \$15.95, cheftools.com, 206-933-0700.
- **Naturals baker's 13x18-inch half sheet pan**, \$15, nordicware.com, 877-466-7342.
- **Le Creuset 4-quart saucepan**, \$159.95, cooking.com, 800-663-8810.
- **11-inch Mercer dinner plate**, \$7.95, crateandbarrel.com, 800-967-6696.
- **Silicone 3.15-inch half-sphere molds (item SF001)**, \$18.95 for a five-mold sheet, bakedeco.com, 800-525-5556.



'twas the night before dinner, p. 42

- **Cuisinart 14-cup food processor**, \$299, cuisinart.com, 800-726-0190.
- From williams-sonoma.com, 877-812-6235:
- **Trifle dish**, \$69 with monogram, \$45 without.
 - **Artisan 13x17-inch cutting board**, \$49.

drinks, p. 32

- **Iittala Essence stemware**, \$40 for two, bloomingdales.com, 800-777-0000.

lasagne, p. 52

- **Imperia pasta machine**, \$69.95, williams-sonoma.com, 877-812-6235.
- **Empire Level 18-inch stainless-steel ruler**, \$13.26, amazon.com, 866-216-1072.
- **Norpro bench scraper**, \$6.99, chefscatalog.com, 800-338-3232.
- **Emile Henry 10x13-inch lasagne dishes in olive and cerise**, \$68 each, emilehenryusa.com, 302-326-4800.
- **Le Creuset 3½-quart round French oven in Dijon**, \$195, lecreuset.com.



MENUS



Snow Day Lunch

Tex-Mex Chile-Lime Chicken Soup
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Corn Muffins with Roasted Red Peppers, Scallions, and Cheddar
page 25

To drink: Session Black Lager from Full Sail Brewing Company

Weeknight Duos

Plum-Glazed Duck Breasts
page 13

Crisp Roasted Parsnips
[finecooking.com](#)

Portobello Mushrooms with Creamy Spinach-Artichoke Filling
page 14

Garden Lettuces with Garlic Chaponas
[finecooking.com](#)

Pork Chops with Green Chiles and Onions
page 13

Sweet Potato Oven Fries with Fry Sauce
page 79



Gift Exchange with Friends

Arugula, Carrot, and Celery Root Salad with Almonds
[finecooking.com](#)

Sweet Potato Cottage Pie
page 78

Gingerbread Cookies
page 36

Hot Buttered Rum
[finecooking.com](#)



Dessert Buffet

Gingerbread-Brandy Trifle
page 50

Cardamom Shortbread Cookies
page 69

Chocolate-Dipped Espresso-Chip Shortbread Cookies
page 69

Caramel Popcorn
[FineCooking.com](#)

To drink: coffee, tea, and Château Roumieu-Lacoste Sauternes



New Year's Eve Celebration

Frisée, Avocado, and Grapefruit Salad
page 65

Spice-Rubbed Roast Beef Tenderloin with Red Wine Sauce
page 46

Cardoons with Garlic Butter and Parmesan
page 20

Classic Potato Gratin
[finecooking.com](#)

German Chocolate Bombs
page 86

To drink: Duc de Romet Brut Champagne

Sunday Supper

Escarole Salad with Olives and Garlic Croutons
page 64

Four Cheese and Tomato Lasagne
page 56

Oranges in Cardamom Syrup with Honey Whipped Cream
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To drink: 2007 or 2008 Isole e Olena Chianti Classico





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VEGETARIAN: May contain eggs and dairy ingredients

MAKE AHEAD: Can be mostly prepared ahead (may need heating and a garnish to serve)

QUICK: Under 30 minutes

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